EXPOSITION

OF THE

DOCTRINE

OF THE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

IN MATTERS OF CONTROVERSY.

BY

RT. REV. J. B. BOSSUET.

WITH COPIOUS NOTES BY

REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D.

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DEDICATION.

TO CHARLES BUTLER, Esq.

HONOURED SIR,

WHEN, lately, I was prevailed upon to republish my translation of what you are pleased to call "the most useful of Bossuet's works"—his Exposition of the Doctrines of the Catholic Church,—one of my first cares, on the occasion, was to cast a look around me; and to remark, within the circle of my acquaintance, to which of them it was, that I could, the most appropriately, undertake to inscribe the important volume. The subject, indeed, cost me little or no hesitation. I felt, at once, that, to none of them, could a work of Bossuet's be more properly inscribed than to the strenuous advocate of that great Prelate's principles; to the warm admirer, and eulogist, of his virtues; and to the elegant Author of his Life. It is to you, therefore, that I present the (I hope) not unwelcome tribute of its dedication.

It is not, however, the above motive alone, that has prompted me to make this

offering to you. A work, whose aim is to dispel the prejudices; and to correct the unjust, and injurious, notions, which, in this country, men, so commonly, entertain upon the subject of our religion, is, surely, very rightly addressed to one, whose zeal, and industry, have been so long, and so usefully, devoted to the same sacred cause; who, by the exertion of his great talents; his profound learning; his mild, but powerful, eloquence,—has contributed to awaken in the public mind a spirit of increased moderation; has enlarged the sphere of liberality, and good-will; and prepared the way (perhaps, no one more so) for that great act of justice, which, unlocking our fetters, has, recently, declared us free. It is, therefore, upon these accounts, again, —but still more, in order to testify the sincerity of my personal regard,—that I feel a particular satisfaction in being allowed to usher in the succeeding pages, under the auspices, and with the sanction, of your much honoured, and deservedly respected, name.

Your faithful and humble servant,

JOHN FLETCHER

Northampton, June 21, 1829.

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AN

EXPOSITION, &c

INTRODUCTION.

CONTENTS.

General ignorance of the Catholic religion—Its causes—Obligation to examine—The Protestant's objections to the Catholic religion—The Catholic's objections to the Protestant religion.

I. It is an observation, with which but a few weeks past, I ushered in a little treatise;—and an observation indeed, which every enlightened reader must have made equally with myself,—that the literature of this country has been long, *hitherto*, very strikingly disfigured by a series of illiberal insult, and low abuse, of the Catholic religion. These are ingredients, which our writers have contrived artfully to mix up with almost every kind of subject, profane as well as religious, entertaining as well as grave. They prevail, of course, in the writings of the polemic, and the theologian. These men,—but particularly the hungry and

the ambitious divine,—have been always sure to hurl their envenomed darts at *Popery*.—They pervade the works of our historians, travellers, &c. These, with very few exceptions, make it their constant business to ridicule our tenets, and deride our practices. It is by these means, by this act of injustice (they know the useful secret well,) that they best recommend their tales of folly; and thus best ensure their sale.—It is so even with our lightest, and most trifling publications, our very novels, &c. Even these, by way of pious episodes,—in order to enlighten the faith of the young ladies, and to warm the devotion of the old ones,—are for ever interspersed with the most absurd, but edifying, histories of Popish vices, and Popish superstitions. In short, it is a fact which no one will deny, that the whole mass of our Protestant literature is deeply inoculated with the poison of rancour, and prejudice, against the religion of the parent church:

> Vetus atque antiqua simultas,
> Immortale odium, et nunquam sanabile vulnus
> Ardet adhuc.

II. Under these circumstances, seeing that thus the talents, and the learning, of so formidable a host of adversaries are every where armed, and arrayed, against us, it ought to appear only natural to conclude, that of course these men understand our religion, and are well acquainted with its doctrines: or, at all events, if this be not the case, nothing ought

to seem so obvious as to suppose, that, ere they take upon themselves to reprobate our venerable institution with so much confidence, they are, if not *well*, at least *tolerably*, acquainted with its character. This is indeed a supposition, which is alike the dictate of mere decency, as it is plainly the suggestion of common sense: because, for a man to pretend simply to *judge*, without knowledge, is an act of folly; but, without knowledge, to undertake to *condemn*, this, if any thing be such, is an act of very gross injustice. "*If you judge*," says even a pagan moralist, "*first* KNOW." *Si judicas, cognosce.*

And what, therefore, is the share of knowledge which the men, who thus reprobate our religion so unceasingly, possess of it in reality? Why, judging from their works, and speaking of them *in general*, I reply, with confidence, *very little, or none at all.* They are indeed, for the most part, even childishly ignorant of it. Neither do I say this only of our *lay* writers; who, from their education, cannot be supposed to be so well instructed in its regard. I say it of the far larger portion of the clergy themselves;—of the teachers of the established church;—nay, even of its very prelates. These men, although enlightened, many of them, in almost every other branch of knowledge, are still ignorant, and to judge from their writings *very* ignorant, of our real doctrines. Thus, too, within the circle of my own acquaintance, I have known several Protestant clergymen;

individuals, some of them, who have earned many a laurel by their victories over Popery. I have conversed often, and familiarly, with these gentlemen; but never did I find any one of them who was so much as *moderately* acquainted with our tenets.*

III. There are various reasons, political as well as moral, which, besides that which I have just assigned, account, in this country, both for the general ignorance of the Catholic religion, and for the strong prejudices, which the public entertain in its regard. In fact, the mere method in which the education of the Protestant is most commonly conducted, is, alone, sufficient, without referring to any other cause, to account but too well for those misfortunes. For, what is the method in which, *usually*, the education of the Protestant is, in this country, conducted on the subject of the Catholic religion? The whole system here is narrow, bigoted, and illiberal. The very child, most frequently, is absolutely cradled to the aversion, and dread, of *Popery:*

*I was one day conversing with two Protestant clergymen on the subject of the public hostility to the Catholic religion. They are, both of them, men distinguished for their talents, and the elegance of their classical acquirements; and what is still better, they are both of them candid men. I therefore asked them, whether it was their opinion, that their fellow-clergymen, who, they had themselves remarked, are particularly hostile to us, really understood our religion? Their immediate answer was,—"*No, we are convinced that they know very little about it.*" And yet these are the men,—shame to such illiberality! who assail us so unrelentingly.

for, the useful impression is often made in the very nursery itself. Here the first feeling almost, which the wisdom of the parent, and the piety of the nurse, infuse into the tender mind, is a horror of the imputed cruelties of our religion, and a detestation of its alleged superstitions. And then, in order to burn the impressions still deeper, pictures the most disgusting, and representations the most odious (this too is common—and I have seen many of these instructive lessons,) are exhibited to the infant's trembling sensibility.—Such, very often, is the first process of the Protestant's education. Now, we know the influence of early impressions. They are strong, deep, and almost indelible. They form, perhaps generally, the character of the *man*,—biasing all his future judgments, and regulating his opinions.

From the nursery the child is ushered into the school. And here is confirmed what the nursery had begun so prudently. Here, perhaps, presides a master, who, although he teach nothing at all about religion, still piously teaches, that Popery is but a ritual of superstitions, and a mass of errors. Here, too, it may be,—Fox, with his fables; Burnet, with his lies; Mede, with his dreams; or else Tracts, more absurd, if possible, than the absurdities of these men, are put into his hands. The consequence again is obvious: as the boy naturally respects his master, so he, of course, believes him. As he never examines the as-

sertions, which he reads, so he, of course, conceives them true. Thus are confirmed the falsest notions of our religion; and the aversion to it is exalted into a kind of piety.

In the walks of society, almost every thing contributes to give increased strength to the above impressions,—the example of friends; the authority of relatives; the sanction of the crowd. Meanwhile, not a single circumstance is permitted to contribute to their removal,—not a single medium consulted; not a book read; not a whisper heard, in favour of Catholicity. Thus, the poison is drunk, without any antidote to correct it. As for a Catholic book, which alone represents the Catholic religion truly, this will be sought for in vain in the library of the Protestant. It is a misfortune, too, in the walks of life, which helps not a little to increase his partiality towards his own religion, and his prejudices against ours, that *his* is honoured, and *ours* insulted; *his* enjoys pensions, places, &c., whilst *ours*, until yesterday, has been always unkindly persecuted. We know the nature of the philosophy of the world, and the character of its logic. Its philosophy is interest: its logic is, to reason most about that which will most promote ts comforts. From causes therefore such as these, it is easy to account for the prevalence of Protestant ignorance, in regard of the Catholic religion. Men seldom study, what they have always been instructed to dis-

like; and what, moreover, is unfavourable to the advancement of their temporal prospects

IV. Another very prolific source of ignorance, and prejudice, in our regard, is,—I need not say it,—the *Pulpit*. The influence of the pulpit must of course, wherever it is employed, be always considerable. It is designed to be so,—designed even to be the principal mover of human opinions, and of human actions. It is a lever, which, if managed with dexterity, will move any thing. Its power, when eloquence thunders in it, is quite astonishing. Hence it is, that, looking into the annals of Christianity, we find, that the pulpit has always been to religion, both the source of the greatest good, and the principle of the greatest evil; the cause of its brightest victories, and the instrument of its heaviest defeats. To it, almost every religious error owes its growth, and propagation. The consequence, therefore, is,—that, if this powerful engine be employed in combating our religion; and employed, too, by men, who have the talents to manage it artfully,—then must its operation, of course, be peculiarly injurious to us. Well; and such precisely is the fact. The pulpits of this country are, for the most part, filled by men,—and, by men, very often, of distinguished talents,—whose constant employment is to insult, and ridicule, what they are pleased to nickname "*Popery*." To do this, they consider a seriously important duty,—the real test of zeal; the surest

proof of orthodoxy; and "the very grace" of Protestantism.

And what is the way,* in which they conduct the important contest? Is it with calmness, and in the spirit of Christian charity?

* It is a circumstance which merits notice, that the Reformation, like other revolutions, was not only effected by violence, but is even founded upon a principle, which furnishes more room for violence, and opens a wider field for insult, than any other perhaps, which the ingenuity of human malevolence could have invented. *The important work*, Dr Hurd remarks, *was begun, and prosecuted, upon the common principle, that the Bishop of Rome is* ANTI-CHRIST, *and the Church of Rome the* BABYLON *of the Revelations.* (Introd. to the Proph.) *Indeed*, adds Bishop Watson, *this is even the* PRIMARY *Pillar of the reformed faith.* (Tracts.) The Pope is thus Antichrist! The church of Rome, Babylon! What food is there not, in such suppositions, for violence! What an inexhaustible fund for insult! I do not conceive it possible for cunning to have invented a stronger artifice to rouse fanaticism, or a surer secret to alarm the simple. Accordingly, these were the very motives for its adoption. *It was adopted*, Dr. Hurd again observes, *in order to persuade men, that, since Rome was the Babylon of the Revelations, they were, therefore, by an express command of the prophecies, obliged to come out of her communion.* (Ibid.) The plan,—although in itself truly ridiculous, and disgraceful to the Reformation,—was, yet, astonishingly successful. Its power was quite electric. It inflamed the ardent, roused the stupid, and terrified the credulous. It created, every where, confusion; and shook the pillar of the church to its very base. It acted precisely like the cry, "*Fire, Fire; The house is on fire.*"—"*In truth*," says Sir William Monson, an acute observer, who, through several reigns, had attentively watched the operations, and the progress, of the Reformation,—"*so very little had reason to do with the defection of the first Protestants from the parent church, that, if an ass could have said, I* PROTEST, *it would have made as wise a Protestant as the chief part of them.*" (Observations.)

or at all events, by reasoning, and the force of argument? For, it is thus, that all controversy ought always to be conducted. Alas, no; very far from this: it is with bitter animosity, and the most injurious imputations;—with imputations so horrible, the Earl of Donoughmore once remarked, "*as to make the hair of any liberal man stand on end.*" But, observes very justly the candid Nightingale, "*Every thing is fair, that is done against the man that has the mark of the beast upon his forehead!*" This observation is well founded: for, every thing in the pulpits of this nation is really considered "*fair*," that, hurled at Popery, is calculated to indispose the feelings of the public against the religion of their ancestors,—even the grossest calumnies, and the silliest lies. I have read a great many of these illiberal compositions; and I doubt much, whether there be any thing more intemperate than the chief part of them, even in the ancient invectives of the pagan writers against Christianity. In short, this is true,—that the discourses of the great majority of our pulpit heroes are the mere effusions of ignorance instructing ignorance; of prejudice gratifying prejudice; and of hostility inspiring ill-will.

> Quod genus hoc hominum? Quæve hunc tam barbara morem
> Permittit patria?*

* So gross is the illiberality of the pulpit on the subject of Catholicity, that, amongst the Protestants themselves, there have been always some,—and there are some still.—

I have remarked, that the influence of the pulpit is always great upon the public mind. It is so, because there are few that reason, and very few that reason well. "*In life*," as Dr. Daubeny observes, "*men always have been, and always will be, imposed upon by sounds.*" This is the case, in particular amongst the vulgar. The vulgar easily believe any thing, that they chance to hear: above all, they easily believe any thing, that is consonant to their prejudices, and that comes to them recommended under the garb of zeal, and the mask of piety. They will then swallow down the silliest nonsense, as so much celestial manna; and give credit to the darkest lies, more willingly than to the plainest truths. But, beyond every other expedient, it is ridicule, thus re-

who, shocked at the injustice, have reprobated it in terms, yet more severe than mine are. I could cite the names of several distinguished characters, who have generously done this; accusing their fellow-preachers with attempting, on the question of Popery, "to lead their hearers by the nose."—"*I am pained*," says Dr. Parr, "*by the* OUTRAGEOUS *invectives, that are thrown out against the church of Rome. And I must further confess, that they appear to me, not only unjust, but even* INHUMAN." "*I hope*," he adds, "*to find a better way of showing myself, either worthy to live, or fit to die, within the pale of the church of England, than by insulting Roman Catholics with the opprobrious imputations of superstition and idolatry.*" How Christian are sentiments like these, and how truly amiable! But, I believe, the fact is,—independently of every other consideration,—that the suppression of the abuse of Popery would prove a very serious loss to Protestant eloquence. It would spoil half the sermons of the Sunday; and blast the laurels of a host of preachers.

commended, that cheats their credulity most effectually. Ridicule, thus recommended, is a figure, which, in their eyes, will prove any thing. It is a magic power, which, conjuring up spectres, and creating enchantments, confounds their reason, and imposes upon their feelings.* Hence, the consequence is,—that, since the public crowd, with impatient eagerness, round their preachers;—since they listen constantly to men, whose constant employment is to revile, and misrepresent, our religion;—so they must, of course, be ignorant of it; and not only ignorant, but armed moreover with hostility against it.

The circumstance, however, which, in all this scene of illiberality, I regret the most, and which also is the most injurious to us, is the character of the men, who stoop to the dirty business of thus reviling us. It is this, that gives to ignorance its strongest sanction, and to prejudice an air of piety;—this, that

*For instance:—It was the use of ridicule, much more than any other argument, that, once, in this nation, ensured to Puritanism its triumphs. It was even the veriest nonsense that principally did this. "*The rag of the Whore of Babylon*,"—thus they called the surplice; "*The Porridge-pot of Popery*,"—thus they termed the liturgy; the names, "*Amalekites*," "*enemies of the Lord*,"—thus they denominated the established clergy: expressions such as these, loudly, and for ever, vociferated from the pulpit by a multitude of interested, and deluded, fanatics, had the effect, not only of seducing the public from their religion, but of hurrying them into rebellion. "*It was the pulpit*," Dr. South observes, "*that supplied the field with swords men, and the parliament with incendiaries.*"

not only deceives the vulgar, but misleads the good. For, who are, not unfrequently, the men, who, thus,—pretending to confute our tenets,—deride them with so much insolence? They are (this is the evil which I lament) not the illiterate, and the unenlightened; not the violent only, and the unamiable;—they are men, often, of the quite opposite description,—the learned, the grave, the gentle, and the benevolent. Even these,—such is the power of early prejudice,—laying aside, when there is question of our religion, all the ordinary features of their characters, assail us with a degree of intemperance, that is hardly exceeded by the fury of the bawling fanatic. I could name many distinguished personages, who have done this; and who do so, still. The consequence is obvious. The public believe such men. It appears absolute rashness to disbelieve them:—wrong, to suspect, that they could be ignorant of our doctrines; and still worse, to imagine, that they would, unjustly, misrepresent them. Thus, for example, when such men as the late Dr. Porteus, or Dr. Watson,—for, I will not name any living prelates,—when such men,—learned, eloquent, and respected; the former, with his venerable looks, and all his amiability about him; the latter, with an air, that was dignity; and a voice, that was music itself:—when such men solemnly tell the public, that "*The Papists are senseless idolaters, demon-worshippers, hypocrites, and liars; their clergy ambitious*

fanatics, doing all they can to delude their followers," &c. (they boldly say all this, and a great deal more than this) where is the Protestant, that, hearing, from such men, such dreadful accusations, would think of calling them in question—or of even doubting of their accuracy?—Thus, therefore, it is, that the most atrocious calumnies against our religion are believed,—accredited by the virtues, and the learning, of its accusers. It is thus, that the chain of ignorance is riveted; prejudice, confirmed; and ill-will, sanctified.

Wherefore, having accounted for the ignorance which prevails in this country, on the subject of our religion, I shall here close this first part of my introduction. Let me, however, before I do so, just express my disapprobation of the conduct of the pious gladiators, who thus assail us with so much cruelty. *Their conduct is uncharitable.* It is this, that keeps alive, in this kingdom, the spirit of religious bigotry; that fans the flame of malevolence: and perpetuates that fanaticism, which is both a national calamity, and a national disgrace. *It is unchristian.* Real Christianity abhors all intemperance. It loves only mildness, and benevolence. Considering error as a great misfortune, it does not insult, but weeps, over the individual, who is the victim to its illusions. *It is unjust.* It is this, that, beyond every other cause, has, until yesterday, prevented the nation from being generous to us; and that engaged it to retain, so long,

those barbarous laws, which were the disgrace, and defilement, of its statute books. *It is ungrateful.* For, as Dr. Parr remarks, it is, after all, to our Catholic ancestors, that the nation in general, and the established clergy in particular, owe,—the former, its chief advantages; the latter, all their comforts. *It is,*—let me also add,—*ridiculous.* For, surely, it is ridiculous, that men, who have never perhaps read a single page of a Catholic writer in their lives (this is the ordinary case,) should pretend to refute our religion; and what is perhaps worse,—should pretend to refute it, without a single argument, that is wise;*—with lit-

* The Book of Revelations,—insulted volume!—is the grand arsenal, which is always made to furnish Protestant hostility with arms to combat Popery with success. Its frightful images; its dreadful appellations; its scenes of horror, &c.; nearly all, refer, of course,—the veriest fool can prove it,—*to Popery.* It is from it, I have already remarked, that the reformers of this country, have derived the very important piece of nonsense,—although indeed Bishop Watson declares it, "*the primary pillar of the reformed faith,*"—that the Pope is Anti-christ! Now, I will venture to suggest just one or two reasons, why the Protestant should pause, ere he give credit to the odious things, which are urged against our religion from this awful instrument. In the first place, is the Protestant really sure, that the Book of Revelations is divine? that it is either authentic, or canonical? Certain, at least, it is, that Luther, "the bright Luminary of Protestantism," did not think so. Calvin, "the Joshue of the Reformation," entertained the same opinion: and Scaliger, a very distinguished critic, praises him for his judgment. In short, multitudes of the most learned Protestants reject the sacred volume. In the next place, can any Protestant seriously believe, that he understands the mysterious Book? "*I understand nothing,*" says Calvin, "*in so obscure a writer, whose very name, and history, are contested by*

tle or nothing else, than noise, ribaldry, and nonsense.—But, in short, be the point of view what it may, in which the conduct of our Protestant antagonists is regarded, it will, every where, and always, be found illiberal; and irreconcilable, alike with the maxims of enlightened reason, as it is with the spirit of Christian charity. Whence, Dryden, describing the character of Protestantism, remarks;

> By malice it began; by malice grows;
> He (Luther) sow'd the serpent's teeth: an iron harvest rose.*

the learned." "*With the exception of myself,*" Jurieu says, modest man! "*every body has been mistaken in its interpretation.*" Indeed, are there, any where, two Protestants, who agree in its interpretation? Wherefore, I ask: is this the book, from which men should pretend,—and that, too, with infallible inerrancy,—to demonstrate our idolatry? Is this the instrument, by which every stupid fellow, and every fanatic, can prove,—as they do,—the errors, and abominations, of Popery? Is this the base, upon which it is wise to erect "*The Primary Pillar of the reformed faith?*"—But, after all, there is some wisdom in this scene of folly,—the wisdom, I mean, of error. For, when error is reduced to straits, it then prudently eludes the clearest things, by the suggestion of the darkest.

* I should be sorry to be understood to have imputed all this illiberality to the whole body of the Protestant clergy. Very far from me such idea. There are,—I say it with pleasure,—in that body, some very liberal men,—the honour of their establishment, and the ornaments of their country; men, too generous to insult us; too candid to misrepresent us; and who reprobate, as I have done, the general mode of combating our religion. However, the number of these is small. There are but few liberal Protestant clergymen. The tree of liberality spreads, only here and there, its lovely shade over the parsonage; and the palace of the prelate. (Bathurst! it spreads a broad foliage over thine.) But, after all, where is the wonder,

II.

V. Wherefore, since it is thus manifest, that the Protestant is, in general, extremely ignorant of the Catholic religion, so it is, consequently, his duty,—and this, too, for various reasons,—to examine it. His ignorance here, if it be the effect of indolence, or neglect; of prejudice, or partiality, is both unreasonable, and criminal. It can never,—reposing upon such causes,—form the basis of Christian hope; nor the foundation of wise security.

He should examine our religion, because examination is the very first principle of Protestantism. "Examine all things; and hold fast that which is good." This is the Protestant's Magna Charta. The process of examination is so essential to Protestantism, that the Protestant, who believes, without having

that illiberality should be common amongst the Protestant clergy? Is not the abuse of Popery every where applauded? Is it not considered as the best test of orthodoxy? Does it not render every preacher popular? Has it not always been the high road to preferment? If so,—then, is nothing, in the ordinary course of things, more natural than Protestant illiberality. For, nothing is more natural, than that men should be illiberal, where it is their interest to be so. However, let us hope, that, ere long, all this will be done away; and that, nourished by the dews of Heaven, the tree of liberality, like that of liberty, will flourish in this nation; and expand its delightful shade, not only over every parsonage, and every palace; but over every dwelling, and every cottage, which smile within its precincts. We have, *now*, indeed, reasons to flatter ourselves, that this bright era is not very distant from us.

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

made it, believes inconsistently. To believe consistently, he must be able, with confidence, to say: "I have discussed the motives of my belief. I have weighed, and compared, its doctrines: and I am convinced, after having made such scrutiny, that my religion is divine." This alone is real Protestantism. Therefore, before the Protestant can consistently disbelieve, or prudently reject, our religion, he is bound, by his own principles, to have examined it.

He should examine our religion, because it is his duty to profess the true one. "*According to the general tenor of the Scriptures*," says Dr. Daubeny, "*from which any safe conclusion can be deduced, it appears, that the appointed road to heaven is through the church of Christ on earth. For, the church is the Spouse of Christ, whose office it is to bring forth children unto God. And it is from the arms of this spiritual Mother, that all the legitimate children of the Father are received. In conformity with which idea was the language of Saint Augustine, when he says:—He cannot have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother.*" Indeed, nothing can be more evident, than that, *with the exception of* ONE, all religions, however respectfully supported, or piously revered, are but mere human institutions;—"*mere putrid carcases*," as Dr. Rennel expresses it, "*cumbering the ground, upon which they stand.*" This, too, is the doctrine

of the first reformers, as well as of the best Protestant theologians. The Calvinistic catechism itself makes the same acknowledgment For, in the tenth article of the creed, asking the question,—"*Why is the forgiveness of sins placed next to that of the church?*"—The answer is:—"*Because no one obtains pardon of his sins, except him, who is incorporated with the people of God; and preserves in unity, and communion, with the body of Christ,—that is,* WITH HIS CHURCH." Again, it is asked: "*So there is nothing, then, out of the church, but death and damnation?*" The reply is:—"THIS IS CERTAIN." The same thing nearly is said in the eighteenth of the thirty-nine articles. "*Accursed,*" says this article, "*are they, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law, or sect, which he professeth.*"—Such are the sentiments of Protestants, respecting the necessity of belonging to the true church. Now, the obligation of seeking this divine establishment, where men have not the evidence, that they do really belong to it, is correlative precisely; and precisely equal, to the necessity of belonging to it. Hence, again, to the Protestant, the palpable obligation of examining the Catholic religion.

He should examine the Catholic religion, because that unhappy revolution is not long since past, which tore his parents from it. Measuring back the little space of a few years, the Protestant discovers, that his ancestors,—

nay, almost his father's father.—were the members of our great community. Every thing around him attests this,—the temples, in which he prays; the monuments, and emblems, which adorn them; the ashes, that sleep beneath the venerable piles.

> *Yon* fretted pinnacles; *yon* fanes sublime;
> *Yon* towers, that wear the mossy vest of time;
> *Yon* massy piles of old magnificence,
> At once the pride of learning, and defence;
> *Yon* cloisters pale, that lengthening to the sight,
> To contemplation, step by step, invite,—

—these, with innumerable other objects, the best ornaments of this nation, were, but yesterday, all, Catholic;—as, in fact, until yesterday, not only these, but every thing else was such, the laws, customs, manners, institutions, &c. Induced by these considerations, the Protestant should consider it his duty to study well the nature of that singular revolution, which, altering the religion, has thus altered the face, and character, of the country. He should, at all events, do this: he should discuss attentively the conduct of the first reformers; and the properties of their pretended mission. For, if their mission were not divine, then was their reformation, a mere rebellion; and its continuation, of course, but the continuation of a rebellion. He should carefully ascertain, whether there existed a sufficient motive for separating from the parent church; and for breaking asunder the bands of unity. For, if there did not,—then, was

the rupture a crime; and the separation, an act of schism. He should investigate carefully the articles of our creed, in order to discover, whether the alleged motives for their condemnation be really founded upon wisdom. For, if they are not,—then is their condemnation a positive act of heresy. These, and such as these, are the considerations, which the Protestant,—placing himself in imagination at the very era of the Reformation; and standing, just as did Luther himself, "trembling upon the brink of the abyss,"—should meditate with seriousness. Because, provided he reflect, he cannot, with any thing like reason, conceive, that, without having ascertained some substantial motive for the circumstance, he can possibly justify, either his own detachment, or the general secession, from that church, which, at the era of the reformation, was in the actual possession (the Protestants themselves allow this) both of the apostolic ministry, and of the apostolic functions.

He should examine our religion, because he solemnly declares,—at least, multitudes do this,—that it is "*idolatrous, and superstitious.*" He swears,—astonishing, and frightful, oath!—that the religion of the far larger portion of the Christian world;—the religion, which the saints all cultivated; and the martyrs sealed with their blood;—the religion, which has formed in this nation, as well as in every other, the fairest models of perfection;—the religion which still counts upon its rolls

some of the best, and most enlightened, of human beings;—this religion, he swears, is "idolatry and superstition!" Now, if there be any thing, that is plain in morals; any thing, that is evident in religion, or in reason itself, it is,—that, before he take the dreadful oath, he ought, at least, with serious care, to have discussed the doctrines, and the nature of the institution, which he thus ventures to condemn so cruelly. For, is it not true, that every oath,—lest it chance to be false,—requires investigation? and does not every moralist, before the awful appeal, exact it? Is there a judge, in any one of our courts of justice, that would not severely reprove the man, who, upon any cause, presented himself to swear to a point, which he had never as yet examined?—In short, what alone, in the eyes, either of religion, or of reason, can possibly justify an oath, is, either knowledge founded upon evidence; or else, wise conviction, reposing upon wise discussion. But, if such be the case, then is it manifest, that some process of investigation should appear necessary likewise, in order to justify the Protestant, ere he can solemnly call Heaven to witness, that the religion of the Catholic is profane idolatry, and stupid superstition. For, surely, the most singular of all oaths is not the only oath, which he may take without precaution.—Therefore, I repeat it:—ere the Protestant can conscientiously declare, that our religion is "idolatry," he is bound at least to have ex-

amined it. His oath, without this act of prudence, is rash. It is, without this, a prostitution of one of the most solemn actions, that religion reverences. Every moralist will allow all this, who has seriously weighed the subject.*

He should examine our religion, although he had no other motive to urge him to do so, but because he finds it constantly assailed by insults; and combated by ridicule. These alone are circumstances, which, in a reasonable mind, are calculated to awaken at least the feelings of curiosity; and to excite suspicion. Insults, so far from being the proper arms of

* Besides the uncharitableness of the oath, which, declaring us "Idolaters," declares us, of course, *accursed*,—there is, moreover, implied, in the dreadful appeal, a variety of absurdities, which, if well considered, will be found subversive, even of the most boasted claims of the Establishment to the title of a church For example, the great claim of the Establishment, according to its best defenders, to the title of being the true church of Christ, is this--that, through the medium of the Catholic episcopacy, it has derived its mission from the apostles. "*This*," says Archbishop Laud, "*is its great boast, and glory*." Now, the truth is:--If the Catholic church had really fallen into idolatry, then it was not,--the thing is quite evident,--any longer the church of Christ. Consequently, possessing no mission, it could not communicate any mission. Therefore, again the result must be, (there is no sophistry in this) that the Established church is a new church; and if so,—then no church at all. For, as Bishop Pearson says: "*Whatsoever church pretendeth to a new beginning, pretendeth, at the same time, to a new Christendome Whatsoever is* NEW *is* NONE."

Thus, the oath, which makes us Idolaters, includes the positive denial of the first claim of the Establishment to the title of being an apostolical, or Christian, church.

truth, are, on the contrary, the very arms of error; and insinuate forcibly, not only the badness of the cause, which uses them, but the goodness of that, against which they are used. At all events, conducted by common sense, men are always, in society, distrustful of the cause, which demands intemperance to support it. They never consider an angry, and reviling, antagonist, as a proper voucher against his enemy; or as a judge, upon whose opinion it is prudent to rely. "*The man*," they instantly remark, "*is angry; therefore, we must distrust him. He is angry; and therefore, in all probability, unjust.*" It is thus, that, on all ordinary occasions, men reason in the walks of life. And their mode of reasoning is correct. Thus, therefore, it likewise is, that, prompted by good sense, the Protestant should be induced to reason from the circumstance of that gross intemperance, with which the enemies of our religion are accustomed always to assail it. Seeing, that these men assail it, with hardly any other arms than those of insult, he should, at all events, doubt, ere he think proper to believe them. He should suspect their wisdom; and acting, as he does upon all other occasions, he should say to himself:—"*These men are violent: therefore, it is prudent to distrust them. For, surely, if the Catholic religion be false—why cannot calm discussion prove it?*" Thus, as I have observed, the Protestant should be engaged to study the doctrines of our religion,

although there existed no other cause to urge him to do so, but the violence of its assailants. But, in reality, this very violence is, *itself*, one of the honourable attestations of the divinity of our religion. For, it is thus,—as Christ Jesus has foretold,—that his church shall be always treated by its enemies;—just like his own sacred person,—with insult, and injustice.

VI. And whilst it is the duty of the Protestant to examine the Catholic religion, so it is of course,—his duty likewise to examine it, with serious industry. He should examine it *attentively*,—with that degree of interest, which is proportioned to so great a subject; and to the expectations of future happiness. Inattention to the discovery of religious truth is as real a moral depravity, as is the neglect of religious practice. He should examine it *prudently*. He should consult, not the men, who, ignorant and prejudiced, misrepresent, and vilify it; but those, who, knowing it, represent it faithfully,—the Catholic divine, not the Protestant calumniator. He should examine it *candidly*,—with no bias upon his mind, but the love of truth; no propensity in his heart, but the desire of eternal happiness. He should,—every prejudice, and partiality, laid aside,—weigh the answers of the Catholic with the same care, with which he weighs the objections of the Protestant. He should examine it *consistently*. Placing before his reason the real articles of our belief,

he should study their harmony; and trace out their connexion. He should follow the chain of proofs, which establish; and the series of authorities, which confirm, them.—He should place the Catholic of ages past by the side of the Catholic of the present day. He should examine it *piously*. He should often apply to the Father of Lights; and from him, by fervent supplications, call down those aids, and graces, which, in a situation like his, are required, both in order to fix in the mind the beam of truth, and to dissipate the clouds of prejudice. Such ought to be,—every maxim of reason, as well as of religion, suggests it,—the nature of the Protestant's investigation of our religion. Would he only adopt it, I could then answer for at least this one consequence,—that he would find Catholicity a very different thing, from what hitherto he has conceived it,—not a code of craft, and a ritual of superstition; but, on the contrary, a system repiete with wisdom,—calculated alike to improve the heart, as it is formed to satisfy the understanding. Indeed, I could answer for more than this: For, seeking the truth in this manner, he will be sure to find it: because the Divine Wisdom has said:—*He, that shall seek the law, with sincerity, shall be filled by it; whereas, he who seeks it, insincerely, shall be scandalized by it.* Psal.

III.

VII. The obligation of examination, thus established,—I will proceed to take notice of a few of the objections, which the hostility of our writers is accustomed, most usually, to urge against us. I will do this, under the general heads of *abuses, and mysteries:*—for, these are the ordinary themes of Protestant declamation. These form the sources of nearly all those objections, with which we are assailed so unmercifully.—The abuses of our religion, it is contended, are so flagrant, as to violate every principle of piety; whilst, as for our mysteries, they are so incomprehensible, it is contended in like manner, as to mock every maxim of reason.—To these notions let me oppose the few following observations:

"*There exist in the Catholic religion, a great variety of very flagrant abuses.*"—This is an accusation, which I will not deny. I will simply ask this question:—Was the religion of Jesus, then,—pure and holy as it is,—ever destined to subsist without abuses? Did not, on the contrary, its divine Author foretel, that abuses should subsist in it?—and not only subsist, but be frequent, in it? Are they not often described in the sacred Scriptures, under a variety of figures, such as "*chaff, bad weeds,*" &c.—existing always in the garden of the church; growing there, but not destroying it?—"*There are abuses in the Catholic religion.*" And were there not abuses in

it, even during the very best eras of Christian sanctity?—in the age itself of the apostles; and at those bright periods, when the common seed of the church was the blood of its martyrs? Such, certainly was the fact.—"*There are abuses in the Catholic religion.*" But, can it be reasonably imagined, that, where *man* is the agent, there will not be abuses? They are, alas! the too natural, if not the necessary appendages of human weakness, and human passion. There is nothing,—such is the influence of these mischievous principles,—that man will not abuse; and that he has not abused;—not religion only, but, laws, liberty, governments, sciences, &c.—in short, every thing that is good, wise, useful, and important. Hence, the consequence is, that the circumstance of the mere existence of abuses in the Catholic religion, is not, of itself, a sufficient motive for its condemnation. Just as well condemn, or refuse to gather, a plenteous harvest, because there grows, here and there, a thistle intermixed with the golden treasure.

The only reason, why, from the existence of abuses, it could be proper, or consistent, to condemn the Catholic religion, would be this,—that they formed any part of her constitution;—that they were the dictate of her laws, and the articles of her faith; or else, that, by her authority, she encouraged, or approved, them. This alone is the point of view, in which,—since abuses will subsist,—

wisdom ought to consider them.—Well; and are, then, the abuses, which prevail in the Catholic religion any parts of her constitution,—of her laws, doctrines, discipline, or maxims? Are they even the fruits of any of these objects? I reply with confidence,—*They are not.* They are even so far from forming any part of her constitution, or from being the fruits of her constitution: that, on the contrary, they are the very fruits, and effects, of its violation. If the Protestant could be induced to discuss, with attention, the real principles of our religion, he would find, that they are calculated, all of them, to produce, and, when cultivated, always do produce, not abuses, as he supposes,—not disorder and corruption,—but virtue, and distinguished sanctity.

"But, at least, does not the Catholic religion approve of many abuses?" To this I reply again:—"*No; she does not.*" So far from this, she severely condemns, and always has condemned, them. She labours, and has laboured, constantly, to correct them. To be convinced of this, let any reader appeal to the decisions, during each revolving age, of her councils; to the regulations of her synods; to the official instructions of her pontiffs; and to the general instructions of her pastors. In all these, he will trace her solicitude to reform abuses; and to establish the reign of piety.—But, in short, I say this,—that I defy the ingenuity of malevolence to produce the instance of one

single doctrine of the Catholic religion, which approves of any one disorder, that is repugnant to Christian morality:—I say too little,—that does not greatly promote Christian morality. Therefore, although it may be true,—as it unhappily is,—that there do exist abuses in our religion,—yet, since they form no part of her constitution; *since they are not articles of her faith;* nor even sanctioned by her approbation;—so they are not, consequently, sufficient motives, I do not say, to condemn, but even to reproach, her conduct.

However, since particular examples bring truth nearer to our feelings, than do general observations,—I will just cite one or two of those accusations, which form the ordinary themes of the insults, and invectives, of our adversaries.

VIII. For example, it is said,—"*that in the Catholic religion, there prevail a great variety of superstitions.*" Upon this unfortunate, because specious charge, my first observation is,—that I admit much of its truth. I admit,—and I lament the evil, as much as the Protestant condemns it,—that there do prevail, and always have prevailed, many superstitions amongst the members of our religion. But what, therefore, is the consequence? These superstitions,—as I have just remarked concerning abuses in general,—do not constitute any part of the Catholic religion. So far from this, the Catholic religion, both in its doctrines, and its laws, condemns them severely.

It is not, consequently, to the religion itself, that these disorders ought to be attributed.—It is true, they may extend, and frequently have extended, to the ministers themselves,—to the pastors, and prelates,—of our establishment. I admit this likewise. But, surely, good sense should here distinguish:—It should feel, that the superstitions of a few ministers are not, therefore, the superstitions of the ministry; nor the errors of a few priests, the errors of the priesthood. The fault, in such case, is the fault, not of the religion, but of the *man*. It is a merely personal thing.—However, I will now ask the question,—what, after all, these superstitions usually are, against which the Protestant declaims so angrily? Why, really,—although incredulity may deride, or profaneness scorn, them,—there is, generally speaking, very little in them, but what wisdom, and moderation, would excuse. In general, though errors, they are very harmless things,—the overflowings of well-meant devotion; the excesses of fervour; the natural effusions of ignorance, and simplicity. At all events, they proceed from no bad principle. Hence, ought the wise,—as they do,—to make great allowance for them: as hence, it is also to be hoped, that God will forgive them easily.

IX. I do not know, whether it be worth while seriously to take any notice of another accusation, which is very frequently urged against us,—that, "*we are not only ignorant*,

but, moreover, the encouragers of ignorance." Ridiculous imputation! believed, only because it is often made; and made, only because it is congenial to malevolence. "*The Catholics are ignorant.*" With deep regret, I again own much of the odious charge. There are, it is true, multitudes of ignorant Catholics. One single cause explains the fact. There are multitudes of negligent Catholics. And hence, for the same reason, ignorance has always been common in the Christian world, even during the most enlightened periods of Christianity. But, does then,—for this only is the point in question,—does the Catholic religion promote, or encourage, the prevalence of ignorance? No, she does not. On the contrary, she promotes, and encourages, every useful form of learning,—not religious learning alone, but philosophical, classical, &c. She is even the warmest friend, and the best promoter, of every polished art. In short,—for, I will not dwell on so palpable a truth,—she throws wide open the gates of the temple of science,—the gates, both of her own sanctuary, and of human literature;—inviting all to enter, and to examine the hallowed stores. She loves no darkness: "*Cupit ipsa videri.*" She wishes for no secrecy, round her throne. She reprobates ignorance as, after vice, her worst, and most dangerous, enemy. It is to ignorance, that she imputes the heaviest of all her losses; even the losses, which she has sustained by the Reformation itself. For the progress of

that revolution was every where proportioned, precisely to the measure of the ignorance of the public mind.*

X. Another objection, which is very triumphantly urged against us, is,—that "*the Catholics are persecutors.*"—To this imputation I once more reply, as I have done to the pre-

* If a comparison were instituted between the Catholic, and the Protestant, vulgar, for example, in this country, (for, it is to the vulgar, that the imputation of ignorance is meant principally to be applied) I have no hesitation in asserting,—I have had many opportunities of making such comparison, myself,—that the Catholic would be found, in general, much less ignorant, on the subject of religion, than the Protestant. The reason of this is obvious. It is, that the Catholic is much more frequently, and much more carefully, instructed, than the Protestant. Private instructions, which are so common amongst the Catholics, are almost unknown amongst the Protestants: whilst, as for the public instructions of the latter, they are, usually, very little calculated,—so dry, and frigid, are they generally,—either to improve the mind, or to interest the heart. "*We often,*" said Bishop Horsley to his clergy, "*make no other use of our high commission, than to come abroad, one day, in the seven, dressed in solemn looks, and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus. Our sermons are divested of the genuine spirit of Christianity; and are reduced to mere moral essays.*" Hence,—and from other causes likewise,—there prevails, incontestably, among the lower classes of the Protestant community in this country,—although it be "the Land of Bibles,"—the grossest, darkest, ignorance. Indeed, the late Bishop Porteus, in one of his Charges, informs us, that he found the mass of the people within his district,—and it is a district, above every other, well supplied with pastors—"not only ignorant, but ignorant as heathens." He makes the same kind of declaration, on the occasion of his arrival at his favourite living, at Sundridge "*He found the people,*" he then complained, "*in the most deplorable ignorance; and actually living without God in this world.*" (Life.)

ceding:—The fact, in part, is true. It is unhappily too true, that the members of the Catholic religion have been guilty of persecution; nay, sometimes (I particularly wish, I could deny this) its very pastors. They have persecuted, because their anger, their interest, their ambition, their ignorance, &c. led them on to do so; or, because they had, in reality, the bad passions of human nature. But that, hence, the Catholic religion itself has persecuted, this is a point, which, with equal confidence, I deny. The Catholic religion itself has not persecuted. There is not any one of its principles, nor any one deduction from its principles, that either sanction, or approve persecution;—I say too little,—that do not positively condemn persecution. The principles of our religion, if carefully discussed, will be found mild, gentle, and benevolent,—its only arms, persuasion, charity, and the force of truth. Consequently, it is not the Catholic religion, but *the Catholic* only, violating his own maxims, that has been the persecutor.—"*But, the persecution was conducted in the name of the religion.*" True: because passion can disguise itself under any form, that seems the best to suit its purposes,—under the mantle of piety, just easily as under the ægis of ambition. It has often done this;—often assumed that sacred, but insulted, veil: because experience has instructed it, that this is the unhappy secret, by which it is particularly easy to cheat simplicity, and to inflame

fanaticism. Thus, in like manner, how often has the holy name of Christianity been employed to execute the most criminal designs? how often have not men abused the venerable names of humanity, justice, friendship, &c.—putting on the appearance of these virtues, and pretending to revere them,—for the very worst of purposes? Therefore again, the consequence is, that the circumstance of conducting persecution in the name of religion, is by no means a proof, that it is the religion itself, which persecutes.—However, I will even put the case, that the Catholic religion has really persecuted. Has not, I ask, the Protestant religion persecuted likewise? Is not the very basis of Protestantism, the persecution of the Catholics? and is not the chief part of its history written with our blood?* Is there, even

* Not only have the Protestants persecuted the Catholics, but they have even maintained, as *a tenet* of their religion, that, "to persecute Catholics" is "*a duty*"—indeed, as the Edinburgh Reviewers have remarked,—"*one of the most sacred of Christian duties.*" Their mode of reasoning was this: "Popery," they said, "is idolatry Now, idolatry is so great a crime, that it ought to be punished with death. *Therefore*," they concluded, "*the Papists ought to die.*"—"*This*," says M'Crie, "*was an opinion generally entertained among the reformers: and it was one ground, though not the only one, upon which they vindicated the penal statutes against the mass, and image worship.*" "*They were led*," he observes, "*to adopt this opinion, in consequence of their holding, that Christian nations are bound to enact the same penalties against the breaches of the moral law, which were enjoined by the judicial laws of the Jews.*" Thus, is persecution an acknowledged tenet of the Protestant religion.

I have just said, how well the hateful doctrine has been

in the darkest annals of cruelty, any where one code of persecution more inhuman, and detestable, than that, which has disgraced so long the legislation of this country?—a code, too, which was as barbarously observed, as it had been barbarously enacted? Hence, should the Protestant, at least, be modest. And, moreover,—supposing, that both the Catholic, and the Protestant, religions have been guilty of persecution,—there is, after all, this apology for the former, which there is not for the latter,—that the former but defended her own.

applied. It has been applied dreadfully, in our regard. Not only did the first reformers sanction, and the Protestant public applaud, its application to us, but they even sanctioned, and applauded, the basest murders,—if committed only upon a *Papist*. Thus Beza and his followers approved, and exulted loudly, in the murder of the Duke of Guise. Thus, Knox, and his associates, extolled that of Cardinal Beatoun. And is it not a fact, that, during the course of above two hundred years, the chief source of popularity to our princes, was, "in this very benevolent nation,"—the persecution of their Catholic subjects? Is it not a fact, that the horrible cry, "*The Christians to the beasts*," was not more common, once, among the Pagans, than was, until lately, among the Protestants of this country, the yell, "*No Popery?*" Is it not even true, that, at our very tribunals, every shadow of justice,—(pity was out of the question,)—was in general denied the Catholic? *The grossest violations of justice*, says Godwin, *were committed on the part of the judges, with whom it was, at all times, a sufficient reason for giving no credit to a witness,—that he was a Catholic.* If, then, the Protestant hate persecution, I can only say,—it is, when himself is the sufferer. This is the observation of D'Alembert. *Les Reformes*, he says, *qui reprochent tant l'intolerance a l'eglise Romaine, ne haissent la persecution, que quand elle les regarde; et nullement quand ils l'exercent.*

For, hers were, every where, the churches, the altars, the establishments, &c. which now form the spoils, the trophies, and the boast, of Protestantism. The Protestant was an aggressor. He, every where, despoiled, and every where punished, the Catholic;—his chief title, force;—his best claim, the success of force.

XI. "*There have been a multitude of very corrupted individuals amongst the members of the Catholic church; even amongst its clergy,—bad popes, bad prelates,*" &c. This objection is specious, and important. However, the reply to it is not difficult. Mine shall be the same as that, which I have made to every other. I admit the accusation; and lament it. But, here is the apology:—The crimes of these individuals were the crimes, not of the religion, but of the *men;*—the fruits of human corruption, and not of Catholic principles. Indeed, they were the fruits of the violation of Catholic principles: for, every principle of Catholicity reprobated them. In the next place, it is a circumstance, which good sense should remember always,—that it is no where written; it never was decreed,—that the members, or even the pastors, of the church, should be, all of them, exempt from the failings of human nature, or distinguished for their sanctity. Sanctity is, indeed, an appendage of the true religion; but it is not the essential characteristic of individuals. The church is depicted, as "*a barn floor over*

spread with chaff, and wheat." And hence, there have always, even during the best, and brightest, periods, been multitudes of corrupted characters. But having thus acknowledged, that there have been in the Catholic church many wicked men,—bad popes, bad prelates, &c.—have there not been in it, too, I now come to ask, (for, wisdom should weigh the good, rather than the evil) multitudes of holy men?—multitudes, who, eminent for their virtues, have been the ornaments of their respective ages; and done honour, both to the Christian, and to the sacerdotal, character? There certainly have been such; and the Protestant himself, however prejudiced, must allow it. These, therefore, should more than counterbalance the numbers of the corrupted. For, the virtues of these, were the real fruits of their religion.*—"*There have been wicked men, wicked popes, and wicked prelates,*

* Notwithstanding the reproaches, which are cast so unsparingly upon the lives, and conduct, of our Popes, it is a fact, Mr. Berington remarks,—and no one is here a better, or a more impartial, judge,—that, "*From the time of Nicholas 5th,*"—who died, anno 1455,—"*with the single exception of Alexander 6th, who was himself an encourager of letters, no Pontiff will be named, whom we can justly reproach with ignorance, or vice.*" (Hist. Mid. Ages.)

The learned Protestant, Muller; D'Alembert, &c. make nearly the same assertion. "*Depuis mille ans,*" says the former, "*les Papes semblent animes d'un esprit immortel, que chacun d'eux adopte, et transmet, a son successeur.*" (Lettres.) "*Aucune liste de monarques,*" says the latter, "*ne presente, en nombre egal, autant d'hommes, dignes de l'attention de la posterite.*" (Eloges.)

amongst the Catholics." And have there not been wicked men, wicked pastors, and wicked ministers, amongst the Protestants too? Were there not many such even amongst the very apostles themselves of the Reformation? Was Luther, then, a saint! or Calvin! or Beza! or Zuinglius! or our Cranmer? Alas! the very accounts, which some of these men have left, respecting themselves, are very striking attestations to the contrary. Their lives, even according to their own testimonies, were grossly immoral:—whilst it is also true,—and this is still worse,—that their maxims were equally immoral as their lives. It will be found, by whoever will give himself the trouble to investigate the important question, that Luther in particular, "the great envoy from heaven," has inoculated upon his religion almost every disorder of his heart. So that, in fact, the reproach of immorality, which is so unceasingly urged against the Catholic clergy, comes with a bad grace from men, whose very apostles, with hardly one solitary exception, were notorious for the grossness of their corruption; and for the excesses of their intemperance.

XII. I need not stop, *now*, to refute another objection, which used, *once*, to be constantly urged against us; and urged, frequently, *in a place*, where its influence was seriously injurious to us. It is,—that "we do not maintain the principles of good faith, &c. towards those, who dissent from our communion."

This is, truly, a cruel accusation,—false as the foulest calumny; and black as that abyss, from which it derived its origin. It is the invention of malice; and its belief is the effect, either of the most stupid ignorance; or of the darkest prejudice. I will, therefore, only say, that the Catholic, just equally with the most rigid Protestant, unequivocally reveres, and invariably cultivates, every moral principle, and religious obligation, of good faith, &c. not only towards his Protestant brethren, but towards all mankind. "*The morality of the Catholic religion*," says Nightingale, "*is the same; and full as strict, as the morality of any sect, that has departed from her communion: and it allows not, either in the head, or members, of the church, the slightest deviation from the known precepts of the Gospel.*"—Why; rather than violate the principles of good faith, and strict morality, has not the Catholic of this country, during the long, dark, night of nearly three hundred years, endured every horrible form of persecution,—penalties, imprisonments, confiscations, double taxes,—in short, every thing, that the cruelty of injustice could inflict,—not unfrequently, death itself? The Catholic, during this frightful interval, has been constantly placed between the alternative of comforts, with the violation of his good faith; and misery, with its observance; between pensions, places, titles, and honours, with the dissimulation of his belief, and neglect, disgrace, and insult, with its cultivation

And how has he always acted? Why: spurning what might have been earned, so basely,—although, according to the Protestant, so consistently,—he always nobly preferred the latter:—misery, before honours purchased by duplicity; disgrace, before titles bought at the expense of deceit. The penal statutes, and the bloody laws, of this kingdom, when combined with the conduct of the Catholics, afford a proof, beyond all exception, how much we have always revered the maxims of good faith; and the sanctity of oaths.

Wherefore, after having thus enumerated a few of the principal imputations, which are usually urged against our religion,—the consequence, to the candid reader, will appear to be this,—that, although there be abuses in it, yet they are neither so pernicious, nor so important; neither so numerous, nor so general, as the hostility of its enemies is accustomed to represent them. Whilst, also, it is a fact, that, so far from being the fruits of its principles, they are the very fruits of the neglect of its principles; and so far from being sanctioned by the church, they are positively condemned by the church. They are the errors of the Catholic, not of Catholicity.—At all events, if it be true, that they do injure religion, still they do not destroy it. If they disfigure its beauty, they do not efface it. Or, if they stain the sacred mantle of Jesus,—yet do they neither spoil it, nor rend it.

XIII. But, after all, it is not in the contem-

plation of abuses, that men ought to study the character of any institution. It is in its principles, in its laws, observances, regulations, &c.; and above all, in the good, which it produces. Because the good is the real result of its character; whilst the abuses are the faults of individuals, and the effects of accident.—Thus, for example, how injudicious should we think the man, who, pretending to ascertain the character of the British constitution, judged of it only by its abuses?—by a few defects, for instance, in the administration; or, by the disorders of a few foot-pads on the public roads? Discussing, therefore, the nature of the Catholic religion, the Protestant, if reasonable, ought to examine, not so much its abuses, as its principles; not its imperfections so strictly, as its excellencies. Or at least, if he do examine the former, he should not omit the latter. Let him investigate both.

If, then, conducted by the hand of wisdom, the Protestant should undertake to investigate the principles of the Catholic religion,—its doctrines, laws, discipline, &c.—what, in this case, will he discover? The limits of a preface do not permit me to describe these objects. I will only, therefore, say, that he will discover, and if candid, allow,—that its principles are, all of them, strictly moral;—that, amidst its doctrines, there is not one, which, properly cultivated, is not calculated to heighten piety;—amidst its laws, not an injunction, but what is framed to prevent disorder;—amidst its

points of discipline, not a practice, but what is adapted to strengthen the life of grace. Accordingly,—let him take a view of the lives of those individuals in our community, who live up to the dictates of their religion. It is the conduct of the men, who obey the maxims, and observe the regulations, of an institution, that forms the best criterion of its real character. Well; and look then, at those Catholics, who cultivate assiduously the principles of their religion. What are the features of their conduct?—I dare here the strictest, and most rigid, scrutiny.—Consonant to the spirit of Christianity, their lives are not merely not immoral, or free from vice; they are sanctified, and holy. They exhibit,—neither is the spectacle unfrequent, even in this age of iniquity, —images of exalted virtue,—of virtue, that would have been admired during the brightest eras of Christian heroism; of virtue, that renews the miracles almost of primitive sanctity; or the wonders of evangelical perfection.*

* Comparisons are odious things; and I do not like to make them. However, I will request any candid man, whose mind, at the same time, is properly impressed with the ideas of the perfection, and severity, of the Christian institute, to compare together the state of Protestantism, and that of Catholicity. In the Protestant communities, for instance, how seldom do we trace any examples of those sublime, and arduous, virtues, which are the distinguishing features of the Christian spirit!—of that love of *poverty*, which, sacrificing all the comforts of this world, "*sells all things to follow Christ*"—of that *humility*, which, burying talents, and titles, and splendour, lives neglected, and forgotten!—of that *chastity*, which, flying the sight of

Now; these are the proper attestations of the qualities of our religion. They not only counterbalance its abuses; not only refute the injurious imputations of its enemies,—but, they show, that it is divine. Therefore, it is in these, that the Protestant should study our religion, principally. I do not say, that studying it thus, he will therefore be induced to embrace it:—because faith is the gift of God. But, at least, he will do this:—he will respect

creatures, hides itself in the shades of solitude!—of that *mortification*, which, renouncing every sensuality, feeds only on the most simple necessaries! These, I fear, are virtues, which are very little cultivated,—if cultivated at all,—in the societies of Protestantism. Indeed, is it not a fact, that even the easy, trifling, observance of an occasional fast, or abstinence,—although, too, it is prescribed by their own regulations,—is almost unknown amongst them?—In like manner, we hardly ever behold, in the Protestant communities, any of those generous victims; those heroes, and heroines, who,—although born, and trained, in the lap of luxury,—sacrifice themselves entirely, in the asylums of human misery, to the performance of the most painful, and disgusting, offices of Christian charity,—to the help, and consolation, of the sick:—few, if any, of those self-devoted beings, whose constant occupation it is,—fast by the bed of death, and inhaling infection,—to fit the expiring sinner to appear before his God:—few, if any, of those apostolic men, who, abandoning all things,—friends, property, home and all its comforts,—go, just like the first apostles, unprovided with every human means,—their crucifix, and their staff, their only arms,—to carry the light of faith to barbarous nations; exposed, perhaps, every day, to death; and the victims, at best, to every kind of hardship. Examples, such as these,—which yet are exceedingly common in the Catholic church,—are, I again fear much, unknown amongst the Protestants. If, therefore, superior sanctity,—as it certainly is,—be one of the characteristics of the true religion,—behold, in the above circumstances alone, a forcible recommendation of Catholicity.

it. His prejudices will be awed to silence; and he will own the injustice of that malevolence, which every day, insults it. Perhaps even may he own, that, instead of a reformation, such as that, which has been created by the furious Luther, and his almost equally fierce associates, it would have been better, and happier far, if the church, correcting a few abuses, had quietly reformed herself.

XIV. Besides the abuses of our religion, its *mysteries* likewise, I have observed, are, to its adversaries, another prolific source of insult, and declamation. I do not know, indeed, whether the objections, which are levelled at these sacred objects, are not even more insulting, than those, which I have just been citing. They are, at least, more dangerous; both because they are usually more copiously fraught with ridicule,—the most mischievous arm of controversy;—and because they are made, apparently, to repose upon the dictates of reason. Upon these accounts, to bad reasoners,—to the vain, the bold, and the superficial; or to men, who are not grounded properly in the notions of Christian faith,—they are peculiarly pernicious; generating, not unfrequently, a prejudice, and hostility, against our religion, which are so much the more obstinate, as they appear to be the suggestion of principle, and consistency.—In opposition, therefore, to these illusive arguments, I will present to the reader a few general principles, which, if well considered will be found sufficient to evince, both

the indecency of Protestant ridicule, and the wisdom of Catholic piety; both the inconsistency of the incredulity, which disbelieves our mysteries; and the consistency of that faith, which adores them;—principles, whose proper application will, at the same time, establish the certainty, as well of *all*, as of any one, of our mysterious doctrines.

It is said, that, "*in the Catholic religion, there is admitted a variety of mysteries, which are, not only, from their obscurity, incredible; but from their qualities, absolutely preposterous.*" To this unchristian objection, I reply, by asking, in the first place, this question: —Are not mysteries, then, (and does not the Protestant himself allow it,) the very essence of Christianity? Does not St. Paul denominate the Christian dispensation, "*the mystery of faith?*" Does not our divine Legislator himself define his doctrines, "*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven?*" Mysteries are, no doubt, the proper appendages of religion,—the necessary institutions of that order of things, in which man is designed, not to enjoy, but to merit; not to see, but with humility to adore. Why; taking away from Christianity its mysteries,—what, in reality, is it? Where even is the mark, that it comes down from heaven? Or where, its great use, and benefit? In this case, it but resembles any other philosophic institution. Christ Jesus himself is, in such supposition, little more than an ordinary teacher;—his chief claim to admiration lost

his dignity diminished; and the very end, for which he came into the world, rendered doubtful, and suspicious. For, if he had taught nothing more than what is human, might he not justly be considered, as nothing more, himself, than a human being? Or, could there, in such case, have been any necessity of deputing from heaven, *a God?* or any reason, why, after having taught only common truths, he should rise from his grave again? Hence, does the nature of Christianity include necessarily the existence; and therefore imply, as necessarily, the belief, of a variety of mysterious doctrines.

Yes; and not only does the nature of religion, but a series of other motives, founded even upon reason itself, inculcate the obligation of revering the sacred objects;—for example, the greatness, and the omnipotence of God; and the weakness, and the littleness of man; the sublimity of the works of the creation; and the inability of the human intellect to comprehend them. These, and considerations such as these, are sufficient, if well attended to, to dispose the mind, without any hesitation, to admit a multiplicity of impervious truths. Indeed, is it not a fact, that, in the order of natural things, there is hardly a single object, (this is a circumstance, that is designed to prepare us for the docility of faith) —which we thoroughly understand? There are every where, and in every thing, clouds, and shades, and perplexities, and abysses. If here and there, in order to manifest his own

greatness, and wisdom, God has sometimes, in the picture of nature, displayed parts, that are bright and resplendent,—he has also, in order to humble our pride, united to them other parts, which no mortal eye can penetrate,—parts, dark, and incomprehensible. It is so in the very objects, which are the most nearly proportioned to the measure of the human faculties. So that, in fact, the whole book of nature itself is a book of mysteries From these circumstances, it ought again, to the Protestant, to seem to follow, not only how unreasonable, but still more, how unchristian, it is, to reproach the Catholic religion with the multiplicity of its mysteries; or, upon this score, to make any objection to it. On the contrary, in the eye of wisdom, and particularly in the eye of piety, this very multiplicity is one of the most powerful recommendations of its divinity.

"*But,—the mysteries of Catholicity, besides being so multifarious, are moreover so inexplicable, and obscure, as to be quite incredible.*" Our mysteries are inexplicable. But is not inexplicability, or impenetrable obscurity, the very essence of mystery? Does not St. Paul define mystery, "*the substance of things not seen?*" Does he not say, that, in religion, "*we walk by faith, and not by sight?*" Are not all the mysteries of the Gospel proposed to us by the divine wisdom, as a new order of things, distinct entirely, and entirely different, from whatsoever sur-

rounds us here;—as divine, and immortal truths, placed out of the circumference of created objects, and beyond the reach of human knowledge;—their chief end, to confound presumption; their very aim, to humble pride? Such, certainly, (no believer in revelation can deny it,) are their properties. But, if so,—then does it follow, that, just as it is unreasonable to impeach our religion, on account of the alleged multitude of its mysteries,—so is it equally inconsistent to accuse it, upon the pretext, that these sacred objects are inexplicable. Their inexplicability is the very stamp, and seal, of their divinity.

"*But, our mysteries,*" it is added, "*are preposterous.*" This is the argument precisely, by which the Socinian derides all mysteries; laughs at Protestantism; and rejects revelation itself. It is, indeed, an argument, which, if it do prove the wisdom of rejecting the mysteries of Catholicity, proves also the propriety of rejecting all mysterious doctrines. But, what are, then, the supposed absurdities of our mysteries? Why, in reality, the very features of their divinity; and the characteristics of their heavenly origin;—the very circumstances, which were intended by the divine wisdom to humble the pride of reason, and to confound the presumptions of curiosity. The supposed absurdities of our mysteries are nothing else than their awful obscurity; their transcendent sublimity; their distance, and dissimilitude, from the order of

created things. Thus, when the inspired writers describe the doctrines of the Gospel, do they not call them, "*apparent folly?*" Do they not denominate them, "*the scandal of human wisdom?*" and "*the rock, against which the reason of man is split?*" They do. And, therefore, the pretended absurdities of our mysteries, so far from being any real indications of their falsehood, are rather,—so different are the ways of God from the ideas of men,—the attestations of their truth. The religion of Jesus Christ, as I have remarked already, is not a system of human philosophy. Its mysterious tenets are not the objects of human science;—not susceptible of demonstration, either by their analogies, or relations, with created things; or by any process of rational deduction. And is it not, therefore, inconsistent, as well as indecent, to deride our mysteries, on the score of their supposed absurdity?—whereas, it is thus admitted, that it is the property of all mysteries to be incomprehensible. It is upon this account, that Dr. Hey,—and so also do many other Protestants,—very justly remarks, that, "*mysteries, though they give most care, ought to give the least.*" In fact, they should give none. For, as mysteries are the essence of religion, so is incomprehensibility the essence of mysteries.

XV. There results, however, from the inscrutable character of mystery, one very palpable, and important, conclusion. It is a con-

clusion, which the Protestant admits, as we do; but which he always forgets, when he pretends to discuss the mysteries of Catholicity. It is this;—that, since mysteries are impenetrable; since the human mind cannot possibly comprehend, whilst still it is bound to believe, them;—there must, consequently, exist some kind of medium, distinct from these sacred objects, to recommend them; some established principle, by which, if real, their reality may be ascertained;—some process, by which, if true, their truth may be discovered. For, "*the obedience of faith*," as St. Paul requires, "*must be reasonable:*" and the mind, although it see not what it does adore, must still see, that it *should* adore. The important principle, too, by which we are thus enabled to investigate, and ascertain, the truth of mysteries, must be, again, not only something distinct from these sacred objects, but something very different from them;—something, not dark, or obscure, as they are; but, on the contrary, clear, and manifest. It must be a principle, moreover, forcible, and decisive;—such as is calculated to inspire belief with strong convictions; and to exclude even the hesitations of doubt. These are propositions, which, resulting from the nature of mysteries, combined with the obligation of believing them, the Protestant acknowledges just equally, as does the Catholic.

The important principle, to which I am alluding, is already understood. It is,—to

express it in one word,—*Testimony;* that is, the attestation of reasonable evidences, establishing the revelation of any mystery; and the voice of real authority, ordaining its belief. *Testimony* is the genuine, and the only, proof of mystery. It is the basis of faith; and the platform of Christianity. "*Faith*," says St. Paul, "*cometh by the hearing.*" Take away testimony, and all belief is blindness. Remove it, and all conviction is fanaticism, or folly.—Perhaps, indeed, if the point were well investigated, it would be found, that the whole, or nearly the whole, order of human knowledge, is founded upon the same principle. For, we should know very little, if any thing, in any branch of science, if testimony, and *experience*,—which is testimony,—did not conduct us. As, therefore, testimony is the foundation of human wisdom, and the spring of human conduct;—so, likewise, it is the proper ground of religious faith, and the basis of religious duty.

These principles admitted,—it at once becomes obvious, what the whole province of reason is, in relation to the belief in mysteries. It is, simply to ascertain the qualities of the testimony, which recommends them. It is, to examine the evidences of their revelation. It is, by the rules of enlightened criticism, to discuss their authenticity; to distinguish them from the forgeries of imposture; and to verify their certainty. This, in relation to all mysteries, is the whole prerogative, and privilege,

of human reason. For, supposing such investigation made,—supposing an individual to have wisely discussed, and prudently ascertained, the authenticity of any mystery,—supposing, that he has discovered it to be genuine; and distinctly heard the voice of God, ordaining its belief;—what, in such case, is obviously his duty? Why; no doubt,—to believe; and with humility to adore, the sacred object. Under such circumstances, it would be guilt to hesitate; and folly to complain of incomprehensibility. Incomprehensibility, in such case, is completely immaterial; or rather, it is an additional cause for veneration. Because, what is farther removed from our little human conceptions, ought to appear more worthy of infinite greatness, than what our reason can comprehend.

Accordingly, I have pointed out the method, which the Protestant, by his own principles, is bound to pursue, when he examines, or pretends to examine, the mysteries of our religion. He should weigh the *testimony*, which recommends them. He should discuss the attestations, which declare them to be divine. He should ascertain *the fact*, whether they have really been revealed or not; or whether the voice of God has indeed commanded him to venerate them. This alone is what he should do. In fact, it is the only process, by which, —if he believe, with consistency, in Christianity itself,—he believes any one of its mysteries,—the trinity, the incarnation, the atone-

ment, original sin, &c. These mysteries are all of them, mere *facts* in his regard,—truths, which, without pretending to understand,—he piously believes, upon the testimony of their revelation. Be this, therefore, his method likewise, in the discussion of all our mysterious doctrines. The consequence will at least be this,—that he will not any longer deride the awful things; nor affect to pity the credulity, which reveres them. He will, on the contrary, reprobate the ridicule of them, as sinful, and indecent;—as repugnant to piety, as it is inconsistent with Christian wisdom. Conducted by this method, he will discover, that all the tenets of our religion are alike deserving credit. For, the same proof,—*testimony*,—which establishes the truth of any one of them, establishes equally the truth of them all. In short, led by the hand of testimony,—which is the only guide in the sacred regions of religion, just as experience is the sole conductor in the dark labyrinths of nature,—he will discover, and, if candid, own,—that the faith of the Catholic is every where consistent; and that if any of our mysteries should be rejected,—then all belief in mystery ought to be rejected too. It is, indeed, for these very reasons, that several deistical, as well as many latitudinarian, writers have contended, that, between the faith of the Catholic, who believes all the mysteries of revelation, and the incredulity of the Socinian, who believes none of them, there is not any wise, nor any real, me

dium. All mediums, they assert, between these, are but visionary, "midway regions in the air."

IV.

XVI. Having, therefore, thus considered the objections, which form the chief theme of insult, and the great source of prejudice against our religion,—I will proceed now to consider, likewise, just one or two objections, which the Catholic, in his turn, is used to allege against the religion of the Protestant. I will present, for this purpose, a few reflections, not upon the various tenets of this religion, but solely upon the general bearings of its leading principle. I will establish the three following propositions; (reasoning upon each of them, as the Protestant himself should reason under the direction of his own maxims) first, that the belief in any one of the countless creeds of the Reformation is irreconcilable with those calm convictions of security, which form the real basis of Christian happiness: secondly, that it is incompatible with that firm, and unhesitating, persuasion, which is the necessary property of religious faith; and thirdly, that the perpetual variations, and instability, even of its best organised institutions, present the plainest evidence, that they cannot reasonably, any one of them, be considered as the work of the Eternal Wisdom. My observations shall be cursory. They may, however, suggest some useful

hints to the prudent mind. It is by considering the dangers, which lie concealed in any path, that men are, often, best induced to study to find out the safe one.

XVII. It is, therefore, a truth, which no reasonable mind will contest, that the first, and best, principle of human happiness is the wise conviction of security. It is this, that forms the sweetest ingredient in the cup of earthly comfort. In fact, there is not any substantial comfort without it: because, without it, the mind, if it reason, is restless and uneasy. This is the case, in all the events,—if important,—of social life. But if so,—or if such be the necessity of conviction even in ordinary things,—then is it manifest, that such feeling should appear more necessary still, when there is question of those vital interests, which relate to eternity. Here, the glad sensation is quite essential. Here,—provided men think,—there cannot be any thing like genuine comfort, in its absence. Its absence, to the Christian, whose heart is properly impressed with the sense of eternal things, is downright misery. In short, for the mind to be contentedly at rest upon the momentous business of salvation, it should be prudently satisfied. It should have some substantial basis to repose upon,—not fanaticism, nor partialities, nor the influences of mere example; but reason, wisdom, and consistency.

These premises established,—which are but the dictates of common sense,—I contend, that

the Protestant, *with his principles*, cannot possibly possess, on the subject of his belief, those calm convictions, which I have just alluded to. He must, *if he have reasoned from them*,—entertain some distrust, and apprehension;—some misgiving, or suspicion. *He must doubt.* And since all doubt is painful,—at least, where the subject is important,—so, of course, he must sometimes feel unhappy. For, what is the real foundation of the *consistent* Protestant's belief?—and what, therefore, the real foundation of his security?—*It is merely his own private opinion.* It is the conviction of the individual, grounded upon his own judgment. This is the true, and the only acknowledged, foundation of the Protestant faith; and therefore, of Protestant security. It is the foundation, that was laid by the apostles of the Reformation; and admitted as such by all their followers. In fact, it is the *necessary* foundation: because the whole fabric of Protestantism is reared essentially upon the ruins of authority, and the rejection of all infallibility. "*For what is the use of reason*," says Luther, "*if it be not, that men may judge for themselves? Therefore*," he loudly vociferated to his deluded admirers, (and we, every day, still hear the bold act of emancipation extolled, as the "imperishable merit" of the great apostle) "*therefore, judge for yourselves; and, spite of popes, and councils, and canons, decide, as your reason*

prompts you. This is Christian liberty· this is Christian wisdom."

Private opinion is, consequently, the real foundation of the supposed security of the consistent Protestant: because it is the real foundation of his belief. But, is it indeed a wise foundation? Does it furnish a strong support to those delightful convictions, which, I have said, are so essential to the happiness of the enlightened Christian? Can the Protestant, who has thus formed his creed, be, without any apprehension, convinced, that it, most certainly, is divine? Must he not, at least occasionally, *doubt?* At all events, this is true,—that his conviction, be this what it may, is but the creature of his own imagination. He is secure, merely in as much as he is pleased to flatter himself, that he is so. This is all the assurance that private opinion can confer. But, again I ask:—Is this, a Christian assurance?—reconcilable with the notions of true piety; and above all, with the maxims of true humility? To me, it always appears presumptuous. It appears so, although the individual, who thus confides, be the most thoughtful amongst the grave; or the most studious amongst the learned. Because, what, after all, is the learning; or,—if left to itself,—the wisdom of the best instructed? Alas! it is, even in these, feeble and defective; its perceptions too imperfect; its decisions too uncertain, to constitute the basis of prudent confidence. Under these circumstances, therefore, it has

always appeared to me, that the Protestant who has formed his creed by the rule, and dictate, of his own principles, must necessarily,—unless he be lost to all sense of modesty,—doubt of its truth; and consequently, of his own security. But, in order to bring this circumstance still closer to the feelings of the reader, let me just hastily represent to him the image of an individual,—of an intelligent, and well disposed, individual,—engaged, with serious care, in the search, and investigation, of his creed; and adopting, ere long, the pious offspring of his own industry, as the object of his adoration. Such delineation will answer a twofold purpose. It will, in the first place, show, how perplexing a task it is for the Protestant to form his own creed at all: and it will prove, next, how still more perplexing it is, when he has thus formed it,—to reverence it as divine. That is, it will show, how difficult it is to be a consistent Protestant; but how much more difficult still, to be,—*if consistent*,—a contented one.

Behold the Protestant, then,—the rule of the reformation in his hand, (it is his chart, and compass) embarking in the arduous undertaking of forming to himself a creed;—or else, of convincing himself of the truth of that, which, by the accident of birth, he now chances to profess. Why; even here I pause to ask, what his feelings ought to be? or what, if he would speak them out,—the effusions of his heart? "Alas!"—methinks, I hear him ex-

claim,—"I am here, in a leaky, weather beaten, bark, going to attempt, and this too upon a dangerous ocean, to reach the harbour of security. I am going to make a voyage, as difficult perhaps for me, as would be that of sailing round the globe, without the knowledge of navigation. I am going, in compliance with my principles, to form, or select, my creed. But, what are my talents, to fit me for such a project? What, my judgment, my capacity, my acquirements? Are they not warped by prejudices; or biased by partialities;—and at best, but slender? At all events, looking at the project, there is room for apprehension; looking at myself, there is room for suspicion. Better, perhaps, perish upon this sand-bank, where I am not safe, than launch out into a sea, where I may perish in still greater misery. Distressing situation! how it confounds me!"—Such, if he chance to speak out his feelings, is the language of the Protestant, setting out,—the rule of Protestantism, his guide,—in search of the sacred but hidden, pearl of truth.

However, behold,—urged on by his principles, he now ventures to proceed,—his leading maxim—"*Examine all things*." Accordingly, he does so. He places before his reason a variety of creeds, and tenets;—the creed, which he has hitherto professed, as well as the creeds of different sectarists. He discusses, first, this doctrine; then, that. He finds this, he conceives, agreeable to his ao

tions of truth; that, repugnant: this, consistent; that, inconsistent:—this, divine; that, false. How perplexing is a state, like this! and how truly awful! How he now envies the situation of the Catholic, who, under the shelter of an authority, which he venerates as infallible, sits down contented, and undisturbed! "Ah!" he exclaims, "fain would I imitate him. Fain would I run to that shelter, too, did not my pride, my shame, my worldly interests, stay me."—At length, however, after a great deal of investigation, and perplexity; after having alternately rejected, and approved, a variety of opinions,—breathless, and fatigued, with the pursuit,—he succeeds in forming for himself, a code of belief. He concludes, by adopting, as the object of his veneration, the creature of his own judgment. The thing is completely Protestant,—composed in obedience to the commands; and according to the genuine rule, of Protestantism: and the choice of it, like the code itself, is consistent likewise.—Well; but, I come once more to ask the perplexing question:—Is he, after all, contented with it? Does he, now, consider himself secure? He remarks, that his tenets are very different from the tenets of multitudes around him; different from the tenets of many, who are more learned than himself; and widely different from the tenets of ages past. Therefore, what confidence can he possess, that they are true? Or, if even they should chance to be true, by what criterion can he be as

sured, that they are so? The best, and only, reason, that he can allege for the wisdom of his belief, are his own opinion, and the feelings of his own heart. Such is the foundation of the Protestant's best security:—for, to him, as a consistent Protestant, authority is nothing. But, is this Christian prudence? Is this a reasonable platform of future expectation? For, what is private opinion;—or what, the feelings of the heart, even in the best instructed,—but, in all probability, partiality, or prejudice? Consequently, the Protestant, who has formed his creed, as by his own principles he is bound to do, must, I conceive, *if he be a thoughtful man*, feel restless, and uneasy. *He must doubt;* and, therefore, be unhappy. Or, if he do not doubt, I can only say, he is a daring man indeed.

XVIII. I have said, too, that the belief in any opinions, which are founded upon the leading maxim of the Reformation, besides being irreconcilable with the sensations of calm security, is incompatible, moreover, with that *firmness* of persuasion, which is one of the essential properties of Christian faith. This proposition is not very dissimilar from the preceding. It is virtually included in it. For, the belief, which is inadequate to the purposes of calm conviction, is, of course, inadequate likewise to the purposes of real faith. However, the point is interesting; and I will say a few words upon it.

It is a truth, then, which no one will con

test, who is acquainted with the nature of religious faith, that one of its essential qualities is *firmness*,—that is, a strong, unhesitating, assent of the understanding;—an assent, entirely unmixed with doubt, and free from any apprehensions of error, or illusion. In religion, in order to elicit an act of faith, the Christian must be able,—and is obliged,—to say: "*Here, I am sure. Here, there is no error. The point is clear: and I cannot be mistaken.*" Such even as these are the notions, and such also the definition,—which the Protestant theologians themselves have inculcated, respecting the nature of an act of faith. "*Religion*," says Bayle himself, "*must essentially rest upon certitude. Its end, its operations, and effects, fail, if once this certitude be wanting. For as, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, no one will prepare himself for battle, just so, if faith be uncertain, no one will obey its laws.*" Indeed, such must be the strength of faith, that not even the plainest probabilities, nor the wisest conjectures, are a sufficient foundation for it. Probabilities, and conjectures, admit doubts. And doubts in religion are sinful things.

Wherefore,—the nature of faith being thus understood,—I proceed again to propose the question:—Can the Protestant, who has framed his creed consistently,—that is, by the dictate of his own maxims, and the help of his own investigation,—really possess that firmness of belief, which I have been describing? Can he

elicit acts of faith, such as those, which I have just recited? Can he, without any doubt, or apprehension, upon his mind,—with a full, and unhesitating, conviction,—say?—"*Here, I am sure. Here, in the belief of these doctrines, I do not,*—CANNOT,—*err. Others may be deceived in their opinions; but I am not.*" Can he, I ask, make acts of faith, like these? Perhaps, under the impressions of fanaticism, he may. But, fanaticism, or the strongest partiality, apart,—the thing is quite impossible. He cannot, certainly do it, with any thing like prudence, or humility. Neither, again, can he make such acts of faith in any one of the creeds of the Reformation. "*Alas!*" says Bishop Taylor, speaking of the established religion of this country, "*notwithstanding our religion is thus founded by our divines, yet it seems not sufficiently marked, or the cognisance of schism taken away. For, we have yet no positive points among us, settled for undoubted truths; there being rather a medley of all religious Christian sects professed among us; or a negation of those tenets of the church, we went out of; and which stood a thousand years before us, as histories and monuments witness. For, what is positive, or of order, and government, is wholly derived and taken from that religion, which, not long since, we pulled down; abominated; and violently persecuted.*" Such were the notions of a Protestant bishop,—one of the most learned, and revered, that this nation boasts,—respect-

ing the established creed. And considering it in this manner, is it easy, or yet possible, to entertain a full persuasion,—a real faith,—in its divinity? I think, NOT.

XIX. By way of reply to these objections, the Protestant, I know it, is pleased to observe,—that "it is not the authority of his own reason; nor the sanction of his own feelings, that constitute the foundation of his faith, and consequently, of his security,—but the authority alone, and the voice, of the *sacred Scriptures*,—which, being divine, are, of course, the proper basis of true religion." "*The Bible*, THE BIBLE ONLY,"—as Chillingworth expresses it,—"*is the religion of Protestants*." Specious, but illusive, sophism!—which, proving any thing, in fact proves nothing. For, this is precisely the argument, which is urged in defence of every form of error; which is made the proof of every heresy; and the evidence even of the grossest impieties. The Bible, insulted thing! is the mantle, which men now profanely use, to cover every frightful sore; and to conceal every disgusting ulcer.

"*The Bible is the religion of the Protestant.*"—Well; but let me here, too, just ask the Protestant one or two very simple questions. Does he, for example, know, in the first place, that the holy volume itself is certainly divine? Does he acknowledge any unerring authority, that recommends it to him? No; he does not. Does he know, that it is

divine, from its context? from its beauty? from its sublimity? from the sensations, which its perusal awakens in his mind? No; he does not. For, these are principles,—the sources of fanaticism,—which the good sense of Protestantism has, long since, rejected. But, if so, how then is he really sure, that the Bible is truly the word of God?—In the next place, —supposing even the divinity of the sacred volume, and his certitude of it,—is he sure, that the translations of it, which he usually reads, are faithful? No; he is not. On the contrary, he is sure, that they are not faithful. For, there is not a learned Protestant, who has written upon the subject of the Protestant translations, but allows their unfaithfulness. They are even notorious for the multitude, and the grossness, of their infidelities. There have been enumerated no fewer than 14,000, in Luther's translation of the New Testament alone. Our English versions, formed principally from the versions of Luther, were, long, equally incorrect as that of the great Reformer. They are still, though improved,—imperfect. "*We cannot pretend*," says Dr. Marsh, "*that our authorised version does not require amendment.*" "*Indeed*," adds Dr. Macnight, "*it is by no means such a just representation of the inspired originals, as merits to be implicitly relied on, for determining the controverted articles of the Christian faith.*" But if so,—how then can the Bible, although divine, be, to the Protestant, who reads it only

in its translations, a real foundation of Christian faith?

However,—admitting both the divinity of the holy volume, and the fidelity of its translations,—does the Protestant, I proceed to ask,—understand it? or is he, by any wise conviction, assured, that his own interpretation of its contents is correct? This is the important circumstance. Because it is not the mere book; it is not the letter of the Bible, (these are dead things,) it is the sense of the book, and the interpretation of the Bible, that constitute the faith of each individual;—that form his creed, and his religion. And does, therefore, the Protestant understand his Bible? No; he does not. There is not any book more difficult;—not any, more obscure, more perplexing, and sublime. Itself declares, that "*it is hard to be understood.*" Flaccus Illyricus, a very learned Protestant, has enumerated a great variety of reasons,—upwards of fifty,—for its peculiar obscurity. "*It is filled,*" he says, "*with tropes, and metaphors, and types, and allegories, and parables, and obscure expressions. It is more unintelligible than the writings of the ancient profane authors.*"—But, at least, do not the learned understand it? No; not even the learned. For, who, in fact, have quarrelled, so much as these, about its meaning? Is there a single text, relating to a single dogma, which they have not interpreted differently?—which they have not distorted into countless significa-

tions?--and made the foundation of innumera ble errors? No; there is not.—But, in short, in order to be convinced, how difficult a thing it is to interpret the Bible wisely, let any individual merely consult the different requisites, which the Protestants themselves,—for example, such writers as Doctors Marsh, Tomline, Van Mildert, &c.—have defined, as essential for the important purpose. These requisites, (they are extensive learning; the knowledge of various languages; wisdom; judgment; piety, &c.) these requisites evince, that, not only is the interpretation of the Bible, in the opinion of the above divines, a very arduous task; but that hardly any individual should presume to undertake it. At least, they clearly demonstrate this,—that it is absolute folly to imagine, that the illiterate, and the vulgar, are competent to explain the sacred volume even tolerably; and folly, therefore, to put it, indiscriminately, into their hands.* So that, as I said before, not even is

*It is true,—recurring to the real principles of Protestantism,—that the Bible, *as it is understood by each individual*, is the proper foundation of the Protestant's belief. Hence, it is also true, that it is an act of consistency in Protestant teachers to encourage, and promote, the circulation of the holy volume. This is consistent in the *Protestant*. But, is it wise in the *Christian?* or reasonable in itself? For; why every where circulate a book, which men cannot, it is admitted, understand? Why bid them explain a book, which, it is acknowledged, they cannot explain? In reality, is it not folly to suppose, that men will judge wisely of their Bibles, who are unable to judge even tolerably of other books? Is it not folly to imagine,

the Bible itself, although "interpreted by each one's good sense," a sufficient ground for enlightened faith; or a real basis for Christian confidence.

XX. Another circumstance, which, besides the preceding, would, I am sure, alarm my security,—if unhappily I were a Protestant,—is the state of variation, which, from the infancy of the Reformation down to the present day, has always disgraced and disfigured,—

that, by the light of his Bible, a man may guide himself securely in religion, whereas, in any other concern, the idea of guiding himself would be treated with contempt: For these reasons alone, the indiscriminate circulation of the sacred Scripture, with the encouragement to all to interpret it, is, in the eye of good sense,—imprudence. It is an evil, injurious to religion; because it is a source of error: hurtful to piety; because it is a principle of fanaticism, dangerous to establishments; because it is the occasion of fresh division. *Indeed*, says Archbishop Bramhall,—and the good sense of several Protestant prelates begins now to feel, and admit, the same,—*the unrestricted liberty of reading the Bible, is more injurious to religion, than all the restraints of the Catholics.* Time will, ere long, prove this.

It is a circumstance, too, which is not devoid of singularity, that, although the established church, in this country, like Protestantism every where, allows all, even the most ignorant, to explain the Bible, yet it allows no one, not even the learned themselves, to explain its Articles, any otherwise, than just precisely as itself ordains. *No one*, says the declaration prefixed to these articles, *shall put his own sense, or comment, to be the meaning of the article; but shall take it*, IN THE LITERAL, AND GRAMMATICAL, SENSE. Now, is this reason, or consistency? For, if men be allowed to explain the Bible, as they please,—why not also the thirty-nine articles? If they may take such liberties with the word of God,—why not, too, with the word of man? This, surely, is inconsistent. However, it is *prudent*

and disgraces and disfigures still,—the character, and the claims, of Protestantism. Variation in faith is not only a presumption, but a manifest proof, of error;—an incontestable evidence of the falsehood of that religion, against which it can be established. It shows faults, and defects, which evince, that such institutions are merely human,—the creatures of human artifice; or the fruits of the human imagination. It is upon these accounts, that the learned lecturer, Dr. Hey, very justly observes,—and many other Protestants make the same remark.—that "*nothing appears so essential to a Christian church, as to admit of no variation.*" The point, indeed, is incontrovertible. *What is divine, cannot vary. Therefore, what varies, cannot be divine.*

In order, consequently, to ascertain the claims, which the Protestant churches arrogate to themselves of being the true religion, there needs no other process, than simply, under the guidance of the above maxims, to examine, whether or not they have varied in their belief. *If they have, they are not divine.* Well, then, take a view of these churches, either in their ancient, or their present, state. What, for example, was the ancient, or early, state of the Protestant churches? Here, we have the testimony of their own authors, and defenders, as well as the voice of history, to inform us. Their own defenders acknowledge, that, anciently, and at the very period, when the marks of their divinity ought to have been

the most prominent,—(as being created by a set of men, who called themselves "the Envoys of Heaven,") they were, still, always, and almost daily, changing their belief. "*Wretches*," say the Centuriators, speaking of the first reformers, "*to-day, approving, what, perhaps to-morrow, they will reject; and calling that, heresy, now, which, just before, they had solemnly decided, was the truth.*" Thus, the Zuinglians have enumerated no fewer than thirty-six different opinions of "the holy apostle," Luther, on the single article of the eucharist: whilst, at the same time, Luther also reproaches the Zuinglians with the same kind of instability,—accusing them with the belief, not indeed of six and thirty, but of *only* eight, different systems, concerning the same important mystery. Thus, again, so frequent were the variations, which were made in the Augsburg confession,—the best of all the Protestant symbols,—that, ashamed of the disorder, multitudes of the reformed derided it. *It seems*, they profanely used to say, *that the Holy Ghost is still in the school of the Father, learning his lesson.* But, in short,—for it is needless to adduce testimonies upon a point, which is not contested,—at an early period of the Reformation, as well as at periods considerably subsequent to it, the reformers, and their followers, varied, and were divided, respecting almost every article of their belief. There was not a nation; nor yet a single town, which was visited by the unhappy

revolution, that was not long the theatre of the wildest confusion. Protestantism, during the periods, to which I am alluding, was a monster with many heads. The fabled Briareus had not half so many

And look, too, at the state of Protestantism, even at the present day, when time and experience, it should seem, ought to have given consistency to it. What, even now, are its features? Alas! changed quite from what they were formerly,—with hardly a line of likeness remaining;—and still changing, every day. Protestantism is, really, fixed in nothing, but variation; steady in nothing, but instability. I doubt much, whether it be possible for any human industry to enumerate all its recent creeds; and modernised improvements. We see new systems; and new errors; and new illusions, continually rising up; rapidly replacing, and expelling, one another, even in this "enlightened" country.

> Her wild belief on every wave is toss'd:
> Not Babel self was half so much confused.

Yes; and if we believe the members themselves of the established church,—even *this* although guarded with so much care, is, still, the school of change, and the theatre of variation; and not only, indeed, the school of change, and variation, but,—what is far worse, —the school also of duplicity, and dissimulation;—its professors publicly teaching doctrines, which, in private, they disbelieve

"*The clergy of the establishment,*" says Dr Joseph Milner, "*have very much deviated from the principles, which they profess; and to which they subscribe assent: and the reading desk, and the pulpit, are often at variance.*" The author of the not inelegant work,—*The Pulpit*,—says: "*Are the thirty-nine articles generally preached in the church? There seems much reason to conclude, they are not. It is one thing to subscribe them; but quite another to feel, and preach, them. We have,*" he adds, "*Calvinistic articles, and Arminian ministers.*" "*Indeed,*" observes one of our periodical writers, "*such is the state of religion, at present, that, if a man be orthodox, to-day, it is a thousand to one, if he will be orthodox, to-morrow. Orthodoxy slips away, like an eel from the fingers. I do not know a single person, either in the university, or the church, who has got possession of it.*" (Univ. Mag.) It is even the opinion of Belsham, (his opinion is, I hope, unfounded,) that Socinianism, if not downright infidelity, is very prevalent amongst the members of the established church. "*There are thousands,*" he asserts, "*professing themselves of the established church, who think with himself:* (we, all, know, what Belsham thinks)—*but are deterred by secular considerations, and the harsh spirit of the times, from avowing their real sentiments.*" However, be this opinion of Belsham well founded, or not,—I do, still, believe it true, that it

would be an extremely difficult task to find, in the established church, or in any Protestant church, a dozen individuals, whose faith accords exactly; or whose belief,—provided they have reasoned,—has not varied, at least occasionally. Such is Protestantism, even at the present period. Can piety, with wisdom, revere it as the work of God? Or, can prudence, when it reflects, live undisturbed under such a system?

That variation, as well as infidelity, should prevail amongst the professors of Protestantism,—these are evils, which are not only natural, but necessary. They are the immediate results of its leading principles. Because, if every individual be the judge of the Scriptures, and the arbiter of his own belief,—then, tell me, what form of variation, or what possible shape of error, is not included beneath such privileges? Such privileges, if men have the unhappy consistency to make use of them, include as many variations, and as many errors, and illusions, as there are visions in the human imagination. For, let it be supposed, that the weak, and the ignorant; the prejudiced, and the partial; the enthusiastic, and the fanatical; the young, and the rash,—the chart, and compass, thrown away: folly at the prow, and presumption at the helm,—let it be supposed, that all these (they are allowed, and supposed, to do so) judge, and determine, for themselves;—what, in such case, *must* obviously be the consequence? Is

not the natural effect,—variation, and error?—Yes, and the result will be the same, if even it be supposed that the learned themselves undertake to form their own faith, under the guidance of their private judgments. For, the judgments of the learned, when left to themselves, are just as unsteady, and discordant, as are the judgments of the ignorant. Perhaps, indeed, is their instability still greater than that of the ignorant: because, reasoning more; and seeing objects in more varied attitudes, they, of course, discover more motives to change their sentiments. And hence it is, that these are, in fact, the very individuals, who,—most divided among themselves,—have introduced into society nearly all the errors, and divisions, which distract it. In reality, the truth is, that the human mind, left to itself, and situated as it is, is a very feeble bark, placed in the midst of a very restless ocean,—the sport, unless assisted, of every wave; and the plaything of every breeze. For these reasons it is manifest, that variation in faith is the natural, and even necessary, effect of the principles of Protestantism. *Unity* is absolutely repugnant to its principles. To suppose unity to co-exist with these, it would be necessary, at the same time, to suppose, that men have, all, and each, the same talents to discern; the same industry to investigate; the same humility to submit, and the same candour to acknowledge,—qualities, these, which subsist no where exactly in the same degree

Hence, therefore, the confusion of Protestantism. Hence, it is a Proteus, always changing;—a Proteus, which nothing can stay from evagation,—nor oaths, nor tests, nor creeds. For, these, like chains, have been invented to hold the monster down. No human art can do this.*

Mille adde catenas,
Effugiet tamen hæc sceleratus vincula Proteus.

XXI. But, although variation in faith be so great an evil; and of itself, sufficient to attest the falsehood of the system, against which it can be established,—yet is this by no means the only, or even the principal, disorder, that results from the leading principles of the Reformation. A still greater evil is, that these principles, besides being the sources of varia-

* The errors, and aberrations, which are so general among mankind, prove incontestably the weakness of human reason; and that truth,—unless it be protected,—cannot live, amidst the disorders of the passions, and the illusions of self-love. Ordaining, consequently, the perpetuity of truth; and the necessity,—in order to attain salvation,—of its profession; our divine Legislator must, of course, have established some safeguard for its preservation; some warrant for its security. Without this, he would have instituted an end without a means. Or rather, he would have instituted an end, which every natural means must inevitably render void. For, unless there do exist some medium, which serves as a check to pride, and passion; and as a guide to human weakness, and human self-love,—there cannot, it is evident, exist any fixed stability in belief; nor any real conviction in religion; no preventive of doubt; nor any remedy for incredulity. In the wisdom of principles such as these, good sense discovers the necessity, and therefore the existence, of an unerring authority,—that is, of the infallibility of the church.

tions in belief, are moreover the causes of disbelief: and, besides having generated a multiplicity of errors, they have been the parents of impiety, and irreligion. The fact is incontestable. They are the germ, and the basis, of Socinianism; and of that wide, and wild, latitudinarianism, which not only disfigures, and distorts, certain mysteries, but denies, and derides, all mystery. The reason of this, too, is obvious. It is the same precisely with that, by which I have accounted for the variations of Protestantism. The cause, or process, which accounts for one evil, accounts equally for the other. For, if men will, all, judge for themselves, as by the rule of Protestantism they should do,—then is nothing more manifest, than that,—formed, and disposed, as man is,—multitudes should judge profanely. Thus, let the proud, and the vain;—let the wicked, and the licentious, judge for themselves, and form their own opinions; determining what is true, and what is false; what is wise, and what is foolish, in religion;—what, of course, must be the consequence? Why; that multitudes will disbelieve;—will not only reject all mysteries, but the very revelation, which proposes them. Such conclusions from such men, reasoning from such principles, are just as natural as is variation in faith among men, who, because less profane, are therefore less adventurous.

It was after having calculated the nature, and bearings, of Protestant liberty, in the

same way that I have done, that many of the French philosophists have foretold, (the predictions of the Catholics had, indeed, long preceded theirs)—that Protestantism will, one day,—and this, too, at no very distant period, —merge into a system of Socinianism, if not of downright infidelity. "*Socinianism*," says D'Alembert, "*is the necessary consequence of Protestant principles: and if the Protestant ministers do not think proper to adopt, or acknowledge it, just at present,—still, their logic must, ere long, conduct them to it. If they be not Socinians*, THEY MUST BECOME SUCH: *not, indeed, for the honour of their religion; but for the credit of their philosophy.*" Diderot makes exactly the same kind of observations. "*When men*," he says, "*adopt, and follow, the leading principle of Protestantism, it is impossible to guess, where they will stop. They must infallibly, ere long, change Protestantism into a state of perfect Socinianism, which will gradually absorb all the different systems of these wanderers; and become a common centre of correspondence, in which their isolated hypotheses, and incoherencies, will join, unite, and lose themselves, like the first elements of bodies, in the universal system of nature.*"

Accordingly, if the fact be investigated, it will be found much too true, that the predictions of these men are hastening on very rapidly to their fulfilment. Socinianism, it is certain, is now, every where, if not the gen-

ral, at least the very common, system of religion (if it may be called religion) amongst all the reasoning portions of the Protestant community. It is so, in Germany, where De Luc, though a Protestant, accuses the Protestant universities of "*secretly undermining Christianity.*" It is so, in France, where the Protestants have adopted the Socinian catechism. So, at Geneva, where Socinianism had, long since, fixed her throne. So, in Denmark, Sweden, &c. So, if we believe Belsham, even in this country; "*where*," he says, "*the number of rational Christians was never so great. before.*" In short, it is so, wherever Protestantism prevails. "*The consequence*," Nightingale remarks, "*is no doubt lamentable. But*," he adds, "*there is no way to prevent it, whilst you allow the principle. For, so long as you admit that ground-work of the Reformation,*—THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT,—*though you spend your strength in fulminations, and your skill in devising new terms of salvation, you will only be laughed at by the discerning part of mankind, as inconsistent, and intolerant.*" In reality, the reasoning of Nightingale is correct.—Socinianism is but true Protestantism. It is its genuine philosophy; and the consistent application of its leading principles. For this reason, Mosheim observes: "*Socinianism began with the Reformation; and the Socinians consider themselves, as the only genuine Protestants; and the real children of the Reformation.*"

Wherefore, having thus rapidly considered the maxims, and the state, of Protestantism, I once more appeal to the candour of common sense; and again ask:—Can it, with prudence, be conceived, that such an institution is indeed divine?—the work of infinite wisdom; and the masterpiece of our great Legislator? What! shall an institution be wisely deemed divine, which is a mere compound of jarring sects? which is a mixture of the most heterogeneous ingredients? which is a body, distorted, and mis-shaped, in every member? Shall a Proteus, which is constantly changing its shape, and colour; and which no fetters can fasten down, —shall a thing, like this, be adored, as the true religion? In short, shall a Babel, which is all confusion; and where hardly two individuals speak the same language,—be looked upon, as the blessed "*City of Peace;*" or, as "*the family of the heavenly Father?*" It, surely, cannot be. Such opinion does but ill accord with the enlightened notion of real religion: for, religion is a system of order, humility, and submission. It does not accord with that petition, which Christ Jesus made to his eternal Father, when he prayed, that "*He would unite his children together, just as Himself was united to Him.*" It does not accord with any of those magnificent promises, which ensure to the church, along with piety and truth, —unity, consistency, and stability.

XXII. Here, then, by the way of conclusion; and as a contrast to the portrait, which

I have just exhibited, I might present to the reader a little etching of Catholicity. However, having already far exceeded the proper limits of an Introduction,—I will not do this. I will merely transcribe a few words, descriptive of our divine establishment, from the work of a very distinguished Protestant,—Bishop Gauden. "*The Catholics*," says the prelate, "*have not light conjectures; nor partial customs; nor uncertain tradition; not blind antiquity, but evident grounds; Scripture; succession; conversion of nations; planting of churches all over the world; crowning their doctrines with martyrdom; authors of best credit, undeniable, famous through all the first ages; and an uncontradicted consent; constant, and uninterrupted succession; their great abilities, &c. Add those credential letters,—the testimonies, and seals, which God hath given of his Holy Spirit.*" Such is Catholicity, as described even by its adversaries. What a contrast does it not exhibit with Protestantism! When the Protestant, after having attentively considered it, casts back a look upon his own religion, must he not feel tempted to exclaim, in words like those almost of the fallen angel?—

> Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
> That I must change for Heaven? This mournful gloom,
> For *yon* celestial light?

Yes; it is true, that, even in these days of confusion, and vice, such is still the state o

the Catholic church;—united, and one;—holy, and undefiled;—in undecayed, and undecaying, grandeur, mocking at the injuries of time. Not all the arts, and artifices, of error; not the rage of tyrants; not the revolutions of eighteen hundred years; not all the lies, and calumnies, of heresy; nor the thunders of insulting eloquence, like that of our English pulpits, have been able, I do not say, to destroy, but even to shake the sacred fabric. It is "*The Rock*,"—an immortal, and adamantine, rock, fast planted in the sea of human life by the hands of our great Redeemer;—its basis, the eternal wisdom: its buttress, the power of providence; its security, the word of God.* It is "*The Ark*,"—which, riding se-

*The Scriptures cannot contradict themselves: and there is, certainly, nothing in the holy pages more positively attested, than that, spite of every obstacle, the church should never perish. Thus, they attest, that *the Spirit of God shall remain for ever with it*. John xiv. 16.—They declare, that *it is a building, founded upon a rock, against which the winds shall blow in vain* Matt. xvi. 18.—They assure us, that, *in it, Jesus shall baptise, and teach, to the end of the world*. Matt. xxviii. 20:—that *God shall give to it doctors, and pastors, till the consummation of the body of the elect*. Ephes. iv. 11.—They tell us, that *the faithful may, each moment, consult it;* (Matt. xviii. 17.) and that *its pastors shall always listen to Jesus Christ*. Luke x. 16.—In short, they proclaim, that *men cannot despise its pastors, without despising Christ Jesus Himself, whom its pastors represent*. Luke x. 16.—Therefore, is the Church immortal. *Therefore*, let the Protestant judge, how false is that daring, and dreadful, declaration of the Book of Homilies, which asserts, that, "*for a thousand years, and more, the whole church had been sunk in idolatry*." Such assertion is irreconcilable with the divine assurances, as well

sure amid storms, is only raised, and elevated by their fury. It is "*The Ark.*" And just as, once, the dove, unluckily escaped, could find no place to rest on, till it flew back to its wonted refuge,—just so, neither will the Protestant, unhappy fugitive! find any wise security, until he measure back his steps to its sacred, and delightful, shelter.

XXIII. Respecting the little volume, which I here offer to the public, I need say little. It is the work of the great Bossuet: and, perhaps, among all his immortal writings, the most useful. It was composed for the use of a few Protestants; but principally for the Marchioness of Dangeau, who had applied to him to be instructed in the Catholic religion. For a considerable time,—having been written merely for the sake of the above individuals,—it circulated only privately. At the request, however, of some friends, but

as with every notion of the eternal wisdom; inconsistent with charity; and repugnant, even to the opinions of many of the wisest Protestant divines:—for, I could cite passages from the works of Luther, Calvin, Beza, &c.; from the writings of several of the most esteemed English theologians; and from various Confessions,—admitting, that the church, agreeably to the divine assurances, has always hitherto, subsisted; and will continue to subsist for ever. So little is the Book of Homilies deserving credit And so little, therefore, deserving credit, too, is that thirty-fifth of the thirty-nine Articles, which declares, that "the Book of Homilies doth contain a godly, and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times." However, the fact is, that the proof of the perpetuity of the church, is the evidence of the truth of the Catholic church And hence, the bold uncharitable, declaration.

chiefly in consequence of the earnest solicitations of the illustrious Turenne;—and because, likewise, a surreptitious, and imperfect, copy had been printed,—the prelate consented, although at first reluctantly, to make it public. The first edition was given in the year 1671. But, such was the avidity, with which it was read; and such also the happy effects, which it produced in the minds of great multitudes of Protestants, that, in the course of a very little time, it ran through an astonishing number of editions; and was, ere long, translated into almost every European language.*

* I might cite the names of many eminent, and illustrious, characters, who,—induced chiefly by the attentive study of the Exposition to lay aside their prejudices,—abjured the errors of Protestantism; and returned to their parent church. Such, for example, were the learned ministers, Saurin, and Papin;—the celebrated Ulric Obrecht, Winslow, Pelisson;—our countrymen, the Lords Perth, and Lovat;—the hero, once, of the Protestant cause, as he was the hero also of his country,—the great Turenne: along with his accomplished niece, Mademoiselle Duras, &c.

It is to the circumstance of the conversion of the last-named personage,—Mlle Duras,—that we are indebted for another very interesting work of Bossuet,—his Conference with the learned minister of the Protestant church,—Monsr. Claude. The case was this,—that, before the above lady could be induced to abandon the reformed religion, which she had hitherto cherished with the most ardent zeal; and which, also, her mother, the sister of Turenne, had, with all the industry of her abilities, and affection, imprinted deeply upon her mind,—she thought proper to solicit a conference, respecting certain difficulties, between Bossuet, and the above mentioned Protestant champion.—For some account of this important discussion, see Appendix.

The excellence, in fact, of the little treatise is above all praise. Clear, and perspicuous, it states, in a manner the most satisfactory, the nature of nearly all our controverted doctrines. Correct, and accurate, it shows these to be divine, even by the maxims themselves, and the acknowledged principles, of the Reformers. Familiar and easy, it is such as the most moderate capacity may understand:*—whilst, at the same time, calm, liberal, and free from every thing like asperity, it is calculated to allay the prejudices; and to soften the irritability of the enemies of our religion. May, then, (I will only express this one wish,) may the good sense of our Protestant countrymen be induced to peruse it seriously! If they do this, they will, at all events, judge more favourably of Catholicity, than hitherto they have done; and they will discover, with astonishment, by what artifices, and misrepresentations, their reason has been misled.

One observation more,—and I finish:—It is this,—that, if in the course of my reflections, I have said aught, that may possibly give offence to the Protestant, I am sorry for it. To offend is not, most certainly, my intention. I should consider such design, as the violation

* To the text of Bossuet, I have subjoined, in the notes, a few passages from the sacred Scriptures; an occasional quotation from the works of the holy Fathers; and, now and then, an extract from some Protestant divine. I conceive, that these citations,—serving as elucidations; or as testimonies, of our tenets,—may be useful assistants, if not to the learned, at least to the generality of my readers

of religion: because I consider the want of charity, as the worst of heresies. I should deem it an infringement of the laws of generosity: because I count, amongst my Protestant acquaintance, some of the dearest of my friends. I should look upon it, as an injury to the cause, which I undertake to advocate: because I look upon benevolence, as the best secret of persuasion. Indeed, to seek to give offence, is repugnant to the character of my disposition.—It is true, that, in the series of my strictures, I have spoken, sometimes, with freedom. But, it has been, merely when I have censured illiberality; or when I have pleaded the cause of insulted piety. And, surely, no candid Protestant should blame, if the Catholic defend himself. For, who is so often, and so insolently, reviled;—who is accused so falsely, and so unjustly injured,—as is,—or rather, as has been *hitherto*,—the loyal, the unoffending, and the virtuous, Catholic?*—However, I will, once more, repeat the pleasing prophecy:

Dabit Deus his quoque finem

* Speaking, but the other day, of the literature of this country on the subject of the Catholic religion, Mr. Cobbett declares, as follows:—(and upon this point, no one is a better judge than Mr. Cobbett:)—"*I verily believe, that there are more lies,—more base, and wicked, lies,—in English books, than in all the other books in the world, put together.*"—The accusation is, no doubt, severe. But, like Mr. Cobbett, I, too, do "verily believe," that the fact, which he thus states, is true.

AN

EXPOSITION, &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE GENERAL PLAN OF THIS INSTRUCTION.

After a series of contestations, which have lasted almost three centuries, it ought to appear natural to suppose, that, now at least, the minds of the Protestant public should be tolerably well instructed, respecting the doctrines of the Catholic religion; or, if not well instructed,—disposed, at all events, to understand them. For this reason it has occurred to me, that I shall perform a service peculiarly useful to the Protestant, as well as advantageous to the Catholic, if I present a statement,—a concise, and simple, statement,—of the real character of our principles; distinguishing them, at the same time, from those false opinions, which the hostility of Protestantism has so unjustly imputed to us.

I have, in reality, very frequently made the observation, that the aversion, which the Protestant entertains for the Catholic religion, reposes principally upon the erroneous notions, which, misled by misconception and prejudice, he has formed of its doctrines; and, sometimes, even upon the mere sound of certain terms, or

expressions, which have wounded his feelings, only because he has not given himself the trouble to ascertain their signification. Hence it is my opinion, that it will be particularly important to explain to our dissenting brethren, what the church, by the organ of the council of Trent, has solemnly defined, in relation to all those articles of belief, which disunite them from their parent institute; without stopping to make any reply to those objections, which are urged, either against individual writers, or against objects, which are not necessarily, nor universally, received amongst us. For, to impute to a whole body the sentiments of a few private individuals would be,—Daillé himself, and the most partial, own it,—unreasonable and unjust. Indeed, Daillé allows, that to separate from the parent church, on the score of any other articles, than such as are authentically established, and generally observed, is both unbecoming, and criminal. For these reasons, I shall confine myself to the decrees of the council of Trent: since it is in these, that the church has spoken decisively, respecting all those tenets, which are the subjects of contestation between the Protestant, and the Catholic, communities. What I shall, myself, add, by the way of elucidation, shall be, only what the church authoritatively approves; and what also, by the plainest evidence, is exactly conformable to the doctrine of this holy council.

The exposition of our tenets, conducted

upon the above principles, will produce two advantages. It will, in the first place, set aside, or prevent, a great deal of altercation: because it will show, that the chief cause of the disaffection, which the Protestant cherishes for our religion, is founded upon erroneous explanations of its belief. It will, in the next place, remove from altercation every thing, that resembles rancour: because the disputes, which thus remain to be decided, will neither, in the eyes of the Protestant, appear so vitally important, as hitherto he had been wont to think them; nor will they seem to trench upon any of the fundamentals of Christianity.

CHAPTER II.

THE CATHOLIC BELIEVES, ACCORDING TO THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PROTESTANTS, ALL THE FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

To begin, then, with the fundamental and leading articles of Christian faith:—It is a fact, which not even the hostility of the well-instructed Protestant can presume to call in question, that, in regard to these at least, the Catholic church does, both sincerely believe, and publicly profess, them, all.

If the Protestant conceive, that the fundamental articles of Christianity consist in the belief, that it is necessary to adore one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that we

must, moreover, confide in Him alone, through the merits and mediation of his only Son who, become incarnate, was, for our salvation, crucified, and arose to life again;—if the Protestant conceive, that these are the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, then must he likewise own, that, as Catholics, we, all of us, profess these. Or, if to the above articles he please to unite those likewise, which are contained in the Apostles' Creed,—he knows too, that we receive all these, without any exception, or restriction; and that even we understand them in their pure, and genuine, signification.

Daillé,—one of the most learned, and at the same time, one of the most inveterate, antagonists of the Catholic religion,—composed a work entitled, *Faith founded on the Scriptures.* In this, after having exposed all the articles of the Protestant churches, he adds:—"*These articles are not even disputed. The church of Rome itself professes to believe them. In reality, the church of Rome does not believe all our opinions; but we believe all its articles of faith.*"

Hence, unless this minister, or the Protestants, destroy their own faith, they cannot, with any thing like consistency, pretend to deny, that the Catholic does really believe all the fundamental articles of the Christian revelation.

But, the point is, in fact, too manifest to be reasonably called in question, although even

Daillé, or any other adversary, had not,—as they have done,—allowed it. The thing speaks for itself. There is not a Protestant, save the stupidly ignorant, or the obstinately prejudiced, but knows, that the Catholic believes every individual article, which the reformed churches have thought proper to look upon as fundamental.* Protestant candour has, not unfrequently, conceded this; regretting, at the same time, that prejudice, and ignorance, should still obstinately continue to contest it.

Aware, however, of the advantages, which we derive from the above concessions, there are among the Protestants some, who pretend to deprive us of them, by contending, that we destroy the fundamental articles, which we admit, by the adoption of other articles likewise, which are at variance with them. This they affect to prove, by the consequences, which, not we, but themselves, deduce from

* "*Under the Papacy*," says Luther himself, "*are many good things; yea, every thing, that is good in Christianity. I say, moreover, that, under the Papacy, is true Christianity; even the very kernel of Christianity.*" (Book against the Anabaptists.)

"*The church of Rome*," says our Hooker, "*is, no doubt, to be attributed a part of the house of God; and we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ.*" (Eccl. Pol.)

"*In the judgment*," says Dr. Some, "*of all learned men, and of all reformed churches, there is in Popery, a church; a ministry; a true Christ. And if you think, that all of the Popish sort, who died in the Popish church, are damned, you think absurdly; and dissent from the judgment of the learned Protestants.*" (Def against Penry.)

our doctrines. Now Daillé himself, whom I have just cited,—less on account of his learning, than for the good sense, and wisdom, of his testimony,—instructs his Protestant brethren, what opinion they ought to form of such consequences, even upon the supposition, that they could really deduce them from our principles. In the letter, which he wrote to Monglat, on the subject of his apology, he says: "*Although the opinion of the Lutherans respecting the Eucharist, as well as that of the Catholics, implies, in our ideas, the destruction of the humanity of Jesus Christ, yet would it be a calumny to impute such a consequence to them; seeing, that they most formally disclaim it.*"

In the Christian dispensation there is, certainly, nothing more essential than the acknowledgment of the reality of the human nature in Jesus Christ. And yet, although the Lutherans maintain a doctrine, from which the Calvinists infer the destruction of this vital truth,—and infer it, too, by deductions, which themselves deem evident,—still, not even upon these accounts, do the latter refuse them the fellowship of their communion. "*Their opinion*," says Daillé, "*since they disclaim the odious consequence, is harmless; and devoid of venom.*" And it was hence, that the synod of Charenton, holden in 1631, admits them even to the holy table: "*Because*," it remarks, "*they admit all the principles, and fundamental articles, of religion.*"

—It is, consequently, a fixed and established maxim amongst the Protestants, that, in objects of religion, it is not the inferences, which an adversary may deduce from any doctrine, that ought to be regarded; but those only, which its own professors acknowledge, or its advocates inculcate.

When, therefore, the malevolence of Protestant prejudice pretends, by inferences, which itself deduces, that we do not honour sufficiently, either the greatness of the Divinity, or the mediatorship of Jesus Christ; either the infinite dignity of his sacrifice, or the superabundance of his merits,—when malevolence pretends, and boldly asserts, this, how easily might we defend ourselves, by appealing to those maxims, which, as I have just remarked, the Protestants respect, and follow, in their relations with one another? We might, on such occasions, observe to them, that, precisely as themselves consider it "*a calumny*" to attribute to any Protestant sect consequences, which such sect disavows,—just so, it is an act of injustice likewise to impute to Catholics, opinions, which the Catholics condemn.

But, I shall now proceed, by the simple exposition of our doctrines, to show the adversaries of our religion, that, so far from destroying, either directly, or indirectly, any of the fundamental articles of Christianity, we, on the contrary, establish them on so strong a foundation; and hang them round with such a blaze of evidence, that no one, except the

most inveterately prejudiced, can, without extreme injustice, presume to deny, that, at least, we understand them accurately, and explain them with fidelity.

CHAPTER III.

GOD ALONE IS PROPERLY THE END OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

In regard to the adoration, which is due to the Divinity, the doctrine of the Catholic church upon this subject is,—that this important act of religion consists chiefly, in believing that God is the Creator, and the Lord of all things; and in attaching ourselves to Him with all the feelings and faculties of our souls, by the exercises of faith, confidence, and love, as to a Being, who alone is capable of imparting happiness to our affections; by communicating to us an infinite good,—which is Himself.

To this interior adoration, which we thus pay to God in spirit, and truth, there are always appended certain exterior marks, the principal of which is *Sacrifice*. Sacrifice, therefore, is a tribute, which can be presented solely to the Almighty: because it is a public testimony, and a solemn protestation, of His sovereignty; and of our absolute dependence upon Him.

In like manner, it is our belief, that all religious worship ought ultimately to terminate in God, as in its only real, and essential, centre.

And, if the honour, which we pay to the blessed Virgin, or to the saints, can be called "*religious worship*," it is only because such acts of piety centre necessarily in the Godhead.

But, before I explain any farther the nature of our religious worship, I will here make this observation,—that the Protestants themselves, compelled by the force of evidence, have now the candour to acknowledge, that the custom of praying to the saints, and of honouring their relics, was generally established, even in the fourth century of the Christian church.* Daillé himself allows this, in his Treatise against the tradition of the Latin church on the subject of religious worship. In this work, he boldly accuses the saints,—Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, with several other distinguished characters of this period: but above all, Saint Gregory of Nazianzum, who, by way of excellence, is usually called the "Theologian,"—

* The Centuriators allow, that, even so early, as at an early part of the third century, the invocation of the saints was practised in the church. *You may trace*, they say, *manifest vestiges of it, in the writers of this century. Thus, in Origen, you have this form of address,—O blessed Job, pray for us.*

"*It is confessed*," adds the learned, and impartial, Thorndyke, "*that all the fathers of both the Greek, and Latin churches, viz. the saints Basil, Nazianzen, Nyssen, Ambrose, Jerome, Austin, Chrysostom, the two Cyrils, Theodoret, Fulgentius, Gregory the Great, Leo; and* ALL, *after their time, have spoken to the saints; and desired their assistance.*" (Ep. to Trag.)

he boldly accuses these holy men of having altered, upon these points, the doctrines of the preceding centuries. Now; I appeal to common sense:—Can it indeed, to common sense, appear reasonable to imagine, that Daillé,—or a few Protestant theologians,—should, at the end of fifteen hundred years, understand better the sentiments of the fathers of the first three ages, than did the illustrious pastors, who immediately succeeded them? Surely, such supposition is preposterous. And it is the more so, because the fathers of the fourth century, so far from perceiving, that any innovation had stolen into the public worship,—on the contrary, positively inform us, (and even Daillé himself adduces their attestations) that, in praying to the saints, they did nothing but follow the example of those pastors, who, in the preceding ages, had gone before them. Hence, without investigating any farther the opinions of the fathers of the first three centuries, the concessions of Daillé are, themselves, a sufficient testimony in our favour: for, he thus abandons to us all the distinguished characters, that graced the fourth age of the Christian church.

It is true, that, in order to lessen the value of the above acknowledgment; and to excite contempt against the holy pastors of the forementioned periods, the boldness of Daillé has insolently presumed to nickname them,—as if they were but a sect,—"*Reliquarists;*" that is, men, who venerated relics. But, surely,

the Protestant community at large will not be thus grossly disrespectful to these great and enlightened men! They will not, surely, dare to pretend, that pastors so eminent for their piety, and so distinguished for their learning, fell, by their veneration for the saints, and their respect for relics, into the odious crime of idolatry; or else, destroyed that confidence, which the Christian ought to entertain in the mediation of Jesus Christ. They should even hush all reproaches of us; seeing, that they cannot employ them against us, without casting them, at the same time, upon characters, which they affect to revere, as we do, for the holiness of their lives, and the purity of their doctrine. But, I shall now proceed;—being engaged, rather to expose the principles of our belief, than to enumerate its defenders.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS.

THE doctrine of the church upon this subject is,—that it is useful to address ourselves to the saints, in order to obtain the aid of their intercession.* She, however, at the same time,

* Tobias xii. 12. *The angel Raphael says to Tobias: When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, I offered up thy prayer to the Lord.*

2 Machabees xv. 12, &c. *This*, says Judas, relating his vision, *this is Jeremiah, the prophet of God, who prays much for the people, and the holy City.*

teaches, that we must do this, in that same spirit of charity; and according to that same order of social fellowship, which prompts us to solicit the mutual assistance of one another, whilst we dwell together on this earthly theatre. Did the mediatorship of Christ receive any injury, or disparagement, from the circumstance of our addresses to the saints, then would it also, as the Catechism of the Council

Luke xv. 10. *I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God, upon one sinner doing penance.*

Apocalypse v. 8. *And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients, fell down before the Lamb; having, each of them, harps; and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.*

Apostles' Creed. *I believe in the communion of saints.*

The belief of the fathers of the church respecting this article is sufficiently, perhaps, stated in the preceding chapter. But should the reader wish to see the testimonies of these holy men, either upon this, or upon any other controverted, subject, I refer him to the learned, and useful, work of Messrs. Berington and Kirk, entitled, "*The Faith of Catholics, confirmed by Scripture, and attested by the Fathers.*"

The fact, however, is so notorious, that, in the early ages of the church, the faithful, every where, invoked the prayers of the saints, that the point is not even contested by the learned Protestants. "*It is,*" says bishop Montague, "*the common voice, without contradiction, of reverend and learned antiquity...And I see no cause to dissent from them,* (the Catholics) *touching intercession of this kind...Christ is not thus wronged in his mediation. And it is no impiety to say, as the Catholics do.* HOLY MARY, PRAY FOR ME." (Invoc. of Saints.)

Indeed, even Luther himself approves of the invocation of the saints. "*I allow,*" he says, "*with the whole Christian church, and believe, that the saints in heaven should be invoked. For, who can contradict the miracles wrought daily at their tombs?*" (De purgat. quorund. art.)

of Trent remarks, be violated in like manner by the prayers, which we thus reciprocally offer up for each other's benefit.

In order, however, still farther to prevent any misunderstanding, the Catechism, which I just referred to, points out the very great, and essential, difference, that exists, between the manner, in which we implore the assistance of the Almighty, and that, in which we petition the intercession of the saints. *We intreat the Almighty*, it says, *either to confer upon us some blessing; or to deliver us from some misfortune. But, since the saints are more pleasing to Him than we are, we, hence, intreat them to lend us their assistance; and to obtain for us the grant of our requests. For this reason, the forms of our petitions, on each occasion, are extremely different. Addressing ourselves to God, we say to Him:* HAVE MERCY ON US; HEAR US. *Whereas, speaking to the saints, we say merely:* PRAY FOR US. (Tit. de Invoc. Sanct.) Hence, be the manner what it may, in which men chance to present their petitions to the saints, it is, at least, to this form, that the church, and its enlightened members, are always careful to reduce them: and this, the above catechism, in the subsequent parts, confirms.

But, it may be well, too, to take notice of the manner, in which the Council itself, instructing the pastors of the church how they ought to speak of the invocation of the saints, commands them to address the faithful. It bids

them say, that "*The saints, who reign with Christ, offer up their prayers for the benefit of men; that it is good, and useful, suppliantly to ask their intercession; and to have recourse to their aid and influence, in order to obtain favours from God,* THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD; *who, alone, is our Saviour, and our Redeemer.*

Neither is this all, that the council teaches. For, besides this, it condemns all those, who presume to inculcate any doctrine, that is at variance with the foregoing principles.

From these principles, it is, therefore, easy to understand, what the belief is of the Catholic church, respecting the invocation of the saints. It is simply this,—that it is useful to solicit their intercession, in order to obtain from God, *through the merits, and mediation, of Jesus Christ*, those benefits, which we stand in need of. It is, indeed, entirely through Jesus Christ, that we obtain, whatsoever we do obtain, in consequence of the influence of the saints: since it is in the name of Jesus Christ, that the saints themselves address the Eternal Father; and in his name only, that their petitions are attended to. Such,—expressed thus clearly in few words by the council of Trent,—is the faith of the Catholic church, on the article of the invocation of the saints. How astonishing, then, it is, that, after an explanation so plain and satisfactory, the Protestant should still obstinately accuse us of "departing from Jesus Christ." We

thus, in reality, only beseech his members, who are, at the same time, ours; his children, who are also our brethren; his saints, who are our first-fruits,—to unite their intercession to our supplications; intreating the common Master of them, and of us, to grant our petitions, in the name of our common Mediator, Jesus Christ.

The same council explains to us still further, and in very few, and easy, words, what the spirit is, or what the intention, of the church, when she offers up to God the sacrifice of the mass, by way of honouring the memory of the saints. The honour, which we pay to them in this sacred action consists in naming them in our prayers, "the faithful servants of God;" in returning thanks to God for the victories, which, through his grace, they have so happily purchased; and in beseeching him humbly, to allow his indignation to be softened by the influences of their intercession.

St. Austin, above thirteen hundred years ago, had made the observation, that, "although it was the custom of the universal church to offer up the sacrifice of the mass over the bodies, and in memory, of the martyrs,—yet, it ought not, hence, to be imagined, that it was *to* the martyrs, that the holy oblation was presented." (L. 8. De Civit. Dei.)—In like manner, the same saint remarks again, that, "at the holy table, during the celebration of the sacred mysteries, a commemoration is made of the blessed martyrs; not by the way of praying

for them, as it was the custom to pray for the rest of the dead,—but rather to intreat them to offer up their prayers for us." I cite the words of the holy bishop, because they are nearly the same with those, which, upon this subject, the council of Trent makes use of, in its instructions to the faithful. *The church*, says the council, *does not offer up sacrifice to the saints; but to God alone, who has crowned the saints. Hence, the priest, addressing Saint Peter, or Saint Paul, does not say to them:* I OFFER THIS SACRIFICE TO YOU; *but, returning thanks to God for their victories, he asks only their assistance; in order that they, whom we commemorate on earth, may be pleased to intercede for us in heaven.* (Sess. 22.) Thus it is, that we honour the saints,—wishing thus to obtain by the help of their suffrages the grace of God; and, above all, the grace to imitate their virtues;—to which we are animated by the contemplation of their bright example; and by the honour which we pay to their happy memories.

The Protestant, who will give himself the trouble to consider the above explanation of our doctrine, will, if he be candid, be compelled to own, that, as we neither take away from the Deity any one of the divine perfections, so neither do we attribute to the creature any one quality, or operation, that is appropriate only to God. Thus, are we distinguished from idolaters,—a name, which, as it is applied to

us, was invented only by Protestant ill-will, in order to make us odious.

But, it is objected, that, "by addressing our prayers to the saints, and by honouring them, as if they were present in every place, we attribute to them a kind of immensity; or at least, a knowledge of the secrets of the human heart,—a circumstance, which, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, God reserves solely to Himself." Now, this objection, although often indeed repeated, is, still, founded upon ignorance; or upon a very mistaken notion of our tenets. For, without examining upon what foundation a certain degree of knowledge of earthly things, or even of the secrets of the human heart, may be attributed to the saints,—without examining this, it is, methinks, evident, that it is not raising the creature above the sphere of its condition, to say, that it does possess some knowledge of these objects, by the means of that light, which God communicates to it. The example of the prophets evinces this. God has often imparted to the prophets the foresight of future events, although such quality ought to appear confined most peculiarly to Himself.

But, in short, never did there exist any Catholic so unwise as to have imagined, that the saints are acquainted with our wants, or read our desires, through the medium solely of their own sagacity. All, that the church, after the example of every age of antiquity, teaches upon this subject, is,—that it is useful to ad-

dress our supplications to them, whether they learn our necessities through the ministry of the angels, (for, the angels, the Scripture informs us, are acquainted with human transactions, being "ministering spirits," appointed by God to promote the work of our salvation) —whether they know our desires through the medium of a particular revelation; or in short, whether God himself discover the secret to them in the mirror of his own infinite essence,—that principle, in which all truth is comprehended. These are points, upon which, the church has decided nothing.

Be the medium, however, what it may, by which God communicates to the saints the knowledge of our prayers, it is still true, that the Catholic does not,—as did the idolaters,—attribute to any human creature any one of the divine perfections; since he does not acknowledge even in the greatest saints, any possible degree of excellence, which does not immediately derive from God. He entertains no veneration for them, save that, which results from their virtues; owns no virtue in them, save that, which is the gift of grace; no knowledge, besides that, which God communicates; no power to assist us, beyond that, which arises from their intercession; nor any share of happiness, except that, which is the effect of their conformity to the rule of the divine will.

Whoever, therefore, considers our sentiments concerning the saints, will conceive it

manifest, that we do not exalt these happy beings above the rank of human creatures. He will likewise understand, what the nature is of that external honour, which we pay them. The external honour, which we pay them, is merely the expression of those interior sentiments, which we entertain for their virtues, and their sanctity.*

* The Protestant, who has seriously considered the real sentiments of the Catholic church, respecting the veneration, which we pay to the saints, will, I am sure,—if candid,—acknowledge, that there is not in it, any thing, that even distantly resembles the nature of idolatry. Hence, he will reprobate that insolence, which, daily, reviles us, as stupid idolaters: and he will feel astonished at that singular policy, which compels men *to swear*,—that we are such. "*I do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess*, (this is the oath, which qualifies our legislators for their acts of wisdom,) *testify, and declare, that I do believe, that the invocation, or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, as now used in the church of Rome, is superstitious, and idolatrous.*" Good God! how truly horrible! To swear, that that is idolatry, which has not a shadow of idolatry in it! To call Heaven to witness, that that is idolatry, which the Christian universe, through every age,—the saints, and the sages, of every country,—have fervently cultivated! Pitiful is the policy, which requires the frightful oath; and dreadful the hardihood, which takes it.

"*Whatever influence*," observes Mr. Hallam, "*a belief in the Pope's supremacy may exercise upon men's politics, it is hard to see, how the doctrine of transubstantiation can directly affect them.—Nor is it less extraordinary to demand from many of those, who usually compose a House of Commons, the assertion, that the practice of the church of Rome, in the invocation of the saints, is idolatrous. Since, even on the hypothesis, that a country gentleman has a clear notion of what is meant by idolatry, he is, in many cases, wholly out of the way of knowing, what the church of Rome, or any*

But, since the honour, which the Catholic church pays to the saints, is manifested principally by the respect, which we show to their images, and their relics, it is, for this reason, proper to explain, what our belief is, respecting these two objects of our veneration.

CHAPTER V.

OF IMAGES.

In relation to images, the council of **Trent** expressly forbids any one to believe, that "*there is any divinity, or any virtue, in them, which should appear to claim the tribute of his veneration; that it is sinful to ask any favour from them; or to place our confidence in them.*" The decree of the council is,—that "*all the honour, which is paid to them, shall be referred to the originals, whom they are designed to represent.*"* Sess. 25. de Invoc. Sanct.

of its members, believe, or practise. The invocation of saints, as held, and explained, by that church in the council of Trent, is, surely, not idolatrous. I have sometimes thought, that the legislator of a great nation sets off oddly, by solemnly professing theological positions, about which he knows nothing." (Constitutional Hist.)

* Exodus xxv. 18. *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work thou shalt make them, on both sides of the mercy seat.*

Numbers xxi. 8, 9. *And the Lord said unto Moses: Make a brazen serpent; and set it for a sign. Every one, that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a brazen serpent; and set it for a sign,*

In these words of the council, the plainest distinction is made between the ideas of the Catholic, and the notions of the idolater, on the subject of images. So far, according to the above definition, is the Catholic from believing, as did the idolater, that there resides any divinity in such objects,—that not even does he think, or conceive, there is any virtue in them whatsoever,—*except that* of awakening in the mind the remembrance of those originals, whom they are intended to exhibit.

which, when they, that were bitten, beheld, they were healed.

3 Kings vi. 29. *And Solomon carved all the walls of the temple round about, with carved figures of cherubim, and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without.*

Like the invocation of the saints, the early use, and veneration, of their images are conceded to us by the best informed Protestant writers. The Centuriators allow, that they were common, even in the third and fourth ages of the church. *Eusebius*, they say, *writes, that he saw, in Asia, Christians, who preserved the images of St. Peter, and St. Paul; and of Christ himself.* (Cent. 3.)

Tertullian, the same writers add, *seems to declare, that the Christians kept the image of the Cross, both in their public assemblies, and in their private houses. And it was hence, that the pagans called them, "Worshippers of the Cross."* (Cent. 3.) See also Cent. 4. *passim.* Our own English writers,—nearly all, who have treated on this subject,—make the same concessions.

In the Wittemburg editions of Luther's works, the great Reformer is represented on his knees before a crucifix.

I could, indeed, adduce the authority of many celebrated Protestants, who approve of the use, and veneration, of images. *The pictures of Christ*, says Bishop Montague, *of the blessed Virgin, and of the saints, may be had in houses, and placed in churches: and respect, and honour, may be given them.* (In Epistom.)

This is the sole foundation of the honour that we pay to images.

It cannot, for example, be denied, that the image of Christ Jesus crucified awakens in us, when we cast our eyes upon it, the lively remembrance of Him, "*who hath loved us so, as to lay down his life for our salvation.*" Whilst the contemplation of the image nourishes in the soul this useful recollection, we are, of course, inclined naturally, to declare, by some external expression, the tenderness of our gratitude; and, by humbling ourselves before the representation, to testify the willingness of our submission to the divine original. So that,—to speak correctly, or theologically,—when we honour an image of an apostle, or a martyr, our intention is, not so much to honour the image, as to honour the apostle, or the martyr, in the presence of the image. Such is the language of the Roman pontifical. That of the council of Trent is similar to it. *The honour*, says the council, *which we pay to images, is referred to the originals, whom they represent; so that by means of the images, which we kiss, and before which we kneel, we adore Jesus Christ; and venerate his saints.* (Sess. 25.)

In short, it is easy to understand, in what spirit the church designs to honour images, by the characters of that respect, which she pays to the cross, and to the book of the Gospel. Bending down to the cross, our intention is, to adore Him, "*who bore our sins upon the*

tree." And if we bow our heads before the book of the Gospel; if we rise from our seats, when the holy volume is presented to us; or if we kiss it with profound respect,—the whole honour, on such occasions, is referred solely to that eternal truth, which is therein proposed unto us.

The Protestant is indeed unreasonable, who considers as an act of idolatry, that religious feeling of the mind, which induces the Catholic to uncover, or bow down, his head before the image of the cross, merely in commemoration of him, who expired upon it for the love of man. And blind,—exceedingly blind, is he, who does not perceive the infinite difference, which there is, between those, who put their trust in idols, under the idea that the idol contains some divinity, or at least some secret virtue,—and those, who, like us, declare, that the only use of images, is to raise the soul to heaven, in order there to honour Christ Jesus, or his saints; and in the saints, the Almighty himself, who alone is the author of all grace and sanctification.*

* It is a fact, that there is hardly a single passage in the Scriptures, which is connected with any controverted question, that the first Reformers did not, some way or other, alter and pervert; "*making,*" as the learned Protestant, Zanchius, admits, "*the Scriptures agree with their own fancies.*" They did this, particularly in those texts, which, relating to idols, they thought fit to apply to images. In all these, they constantly translated the word, "idol,"—*image;* or else, "image,"—*idol;* precisely as the alteration was adapted to their designs; or as it seemed best calculated to alarm the piety and to scare the simplicity of

CHAPTER VI

ON RELICS.

THE honour, which, in imitation of the first Christians, we pay to the relics of the saints, is similar to that, which we testify for their memories.* The bodies of the saints are so

the ignorant. It was thus, for example, that they translated the twenty-first verse of the fifth chapter of the first epistle of St. John:—"*Babes, keep yourselves from images;*"—a translation, which is false, and ridiculous, as its aim was mischievous. For, in order to deceive the vulgar, and to excite confusion, they fixed up the awful words, in huge and terrific characters, throughout all, or nearly all, the churches of the nation. It was by falsehoods, and impositions, such as these, that they best succeeded in cheating the credulity of the public.

* Fourth Book of Kings, xiii. 21. *When a dead man was let down into the sepulchre of Eliseus, no sooner did he touch the bones of the prophet, than he was revived; and stood up on his feet.*

Acts xix. 11, 12. *And God wrought, by the hand of Paul, more than common miracles. So that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs, and aprons: and the diseases departed from them; and the wicked spirits went out of them.*

The Centuriators allow, that the veneration of relics prevailed in the church, in the third and fourth centuries. *Saint Cyprian*, they say, *exhorts the priests of Rome carefully to mark down the days of the deaths of the martyrs, in order that they might celebrate their commemoration, in the chapels of the martyrs.* (Cent. 3.) "*It was,*" they add, "*in this* (the fourth) *century, that began the translation and veneration of the relics of the saints.*" (Cent. 4.)

So manifest, in reality, is the veneration, which, in the early ages of the church, the Christians used to pay to relics, that not even do the learned, though most inveterate, Protestants attempt to dispute it. Daillé, Blondel, Chem

many victims, that have been offered up to God, either by the sacrifice of martyrdom, or by the hardships of penance. And did the Protestant reflect, that it is in this point of view, that we consider them, he would not then conceive, as through prejudice he does too often, that the respect, which, from such motives, we show to these venerable objects, could possibly detach us from that honour, which we owe to God.

The affection, which, in the cases of human friendship, a friend experiences for a friend, extends, not only to the cherished individual, but to his children, and relations; and not merely to these, but even to whatever represents him; to whatever once belonged to him; or that brings back to the mind the pleasing remembrance of him. This is the dictate of the instincts of nature. And did the Protestant again weigh this, then would he likewise understand, how the progress of honour is similar to that of friendship: since honour is nothing else, in reality, than affection united with fear, and mingled with respect. In short, did the Protestant consider, that the whole exterior worship, which the Catholic cultivates, derives its origin from God alone, and returns solely

nitius, Whitaker, &c. attest the prevalence of this veneration, frequently. Indeed, the works of the fathers are full of testimonies in commendation of it. EVERY WHERE, says St. Hilary, *is the blood of the martyrs received; and their venerable bones bear witness;—the devils trembling before them; maladies expelled; and wonders wrought* (Contra Constant.)

to God again,—lid he consider this, then would he, also, conceive clearly, that such worship, animated as it thus is merely by the Author of sanctity, cannot possibly be displeasing to any one of his divine perfections. He would, on the contrary, conceive, that, if God, jealous as He is of the love of men, does yet permit them to love each other for the love of Him, nor deems such love the division of our affections,—just so, jealous as He likewise is of the respect, and veneration, of the faithful, still does He allow them also,—without looking upon such act, as any partition of the worship, which is due to Him,—to honour, *for His sake*, those happy beings, whom Himself has honoured so greatly.

It is, however, true, that the external marks of reverence, which, at different periods, the Catholic may have employed in expressing his veneration for the saints, are by no means, all of them, essential to religion. Without making any alteration in her doctrine, the church has often extended, or abridged, her external practices; regulated, in these points, by the nature of circumstances; by the character of times, places, and events; not wishing, that her children should be servilely subjected to visible things; but by their means, be animated only to greater fervour; and admonished to turn the mind to God, in order to present to him, in spirit and truth, "that reasonable service," which he expects from all his creatures.

After this natural, and simple, exposition of our tenets, it is obvious, as I have remarked already, that a great part of our disputes would be prevented, or at least hushed, did men only give themselves the trouble to appreciate terms; or else, conduct themselves with Christian charity. Would the Protestant only consider calmly the above explanations,—which comprise the express doctrine of the council of Trent,—he would cease to reproach us with violating the mediation of Jesus Christ; with invoking the saints, or honouring their images, in a way, that should be appropriated to God alone. Adoration, it is true, invocation, and the name of Mediator, do in some sense, belong only to God, and to Christ Jesus. And hence, it is easy to abuse, or misapply, these terms, in order to throw an odium upon our tenets. But, if men would act candidly, and reduce words to the signification, which I have just been giving them,—then would their reproaches vanish: and their objections lose all their influence. Or, if they had any other difficulties, less important than the foregoing, to object against us,—sincerity would compel them to acknowledge, that they are satisfied, at least, upon the principal subjects of their prejudices, and complaints.

At all events, certain it is, that nothing can be more unjust than the objection, which is so very often urged against us,—"that we make piety consist in mere devotion to the saints:"—whereas, all, that the church, or the

council of Trent, teaches upon the subject, is simply this,—that "*it is good and useful, to invoke their intercession.*"—The design, therefore, of the church is, to condemn those, who, either out of contempt, or through error, reject this act of piety. Her censure, in such cases, is wise: because, whilst it is wrong to permit the contempt of practices, which are beneficial to salvation, it is wrong likewise to tolerate, under the mere sanction of a few upstart teachers, the condemnation of a doctrine, which every age of Christianity has authorised, and cultivated.

CHAPTER VII.

ON JUSTIFICATION.

THE question respecting justification will point out, in a manner, still clearer than any of the preceding, how many difficulties might be terminated, or prevented, by the simple exposition of our sentiments, and opinions.

Whoever is conversant, although it be but slenderly, in the history of Protestantism, knows, that its first authors considered this article; and proposed it to the public, as the chief, and fundamental, principle of their unhappy separation from the parent church. So that it is peculiarly necessary to understand it with some precision.

It is our belief, then, in the first place, that *our sins are gratuitously remitted to us by*

*the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.** These are the terms precisely, which the council of Trent makes use of; adding to them moreover, that, "*we are said to be justified gratuitously, because none of the things, which precede justification, whether it be faith, or good works, can merit this blessing for us.*"† Sess. vi.

The Scriptures explain to us the remission of sins, by saying, sometimes, that "*God covers them;*" sometimes, that "*he takes them away;*" sometimes, that "*he effaces them by the grace of the Holy Ghost,*" who makes us, as it were, new creatures. Induced by the variety of these expressions, we conceive it wise to join them all together; in order, from their combination, to form a perfect notion of the justification of the sinner. This process, therefore, observed,—it is our consequent be-

* Romans iii. 23, 24, 25. *For, all have sinned; and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.*

Ephesians i. 7. *In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the remission of sins.*

1 Timothy ii. 5, 6. *For, there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all.*

† John xv. 5. *He, that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. For, without me, you can do nothing.*

Ephesians ii. 8, 9. *For, by grace you are saved, through faith; and that, not of yourselves: for, it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man may glory.*

Titus iii. 7. *That being justified by his grace, we may be heirs, according to hope, of life everlasting.*

lief, that, not only are our sins covered; but entirely washed away, and effaced, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of regeneration. Neither does this opinion, either darken, or diminish, the ideas, which we ought to entertain of the merits of our Saviour's sufferings. It, on the contrary, enlivens, and increases, them.

Again, therefore, the consequence is,—that the justice of Jesus Christ is not only imputed, but actually communicated, to his faithful, by the operation of the Holy Ghost: so that, by his grace, men are not merely reputed just, but really rendered just.*

For, if the justice, which is in us, were justice merely in the eyes of men, then would it not be the work of the Holy Ghost. It is, consequently, justice in the eyes of God: since it is God himself, who creates it in us, by shedding abroad his charity through our hearts.

At the same time, it is unhappily too true, that *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* It is true, that *we are, all of us, wanting in many things.* For these reasons, although even our justice, by the infusion of the divine love, be real;

* Romans v. 5. *The charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.*

Ephesians iv. 24. *Put on the new man, which, according to God, is created in justice and holiness.*

Titus iii. 5, 6. *According to his mercy, he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us in abundance, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

still, it is not perfect justice, on account of the combats of concupiscence, that works within us. So that the main duty of Christian justice is to nourish constantly in the heart a spirit of penance, and of deep regret for iniquity. We, therefore, with Saint Austin, humbly own, that, in this life, our justice consists, rather in the forgiveness of sin, than in the perfection of virtue

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CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MERIT OF GOOD WORKS.

THE doctrine of the Catholic Church respecting the merit of good works, is,—*that eternal life ought to be proposed to the children of God, both as a grace, which is mercifully promised to them; and as a recompence, which, by virtue of this promise, is faithfully bestowed upon their good works, and their deservings.** Such is the language of the council of Trent. (Sess. vi.)

* Matthew x. 42. *Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, amen, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.*

Matthew xvi. 27. *For, the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then will he render to every man, according to his works.*

Hebrews vi. 10. *For, God is not unjust, that he should forget your work, and the love, which you have shown in his name; you, who have ministered, and do minister, to the saints.*

2 Peter i. 10. *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more,*

Lest, however, the weakness of human pride should be flattered with the idea of any presumptuous merit, the council, at the same time, inculcates, that the price, and value, of Christian actions proceed wholly from the efficacy of sanctifying grace;—a grace, gratuitously bestowed upon us, in the name of Jesus Christ; as well as the fruit of the continual influence of this divine Head over the conduct of his members.

In reality, the precepts, and the exhortations; the promises, the threats, and the reproaches, of the Gospel, do manifestly attest,—that it is the duty of the Christian to work out his salvation, by the movement of his own will, co-operating with the grace of God, who is mercifully pleased to aid us.—For, it is a leading maxim of our religion, that free-will, of itself, unaided by grace, and uninfluenced by the Holy Ghost, can do nothing, that conducts to the purchase of eternal happiness.

Wherefore, convinced, that it is this divine Spirit, which, by the operation of his graces, produces in us whatsoever good we do,—we, for this reason, believe, moreover, that the good works of the faithful are peculiarly pleasing to the Almighty; and valuable in his sight. And it is hence, that, after the exam-

that, by good works, you may make your calling, and election, sure.

James ii 14. 17. *What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say, he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? Faith, if it hath not works is dead in itself.*

ple of every age of Christian antiquity, we make use of the term, "*merit;*"—designing, by it, to express principally the price, and the dignity, of those actions, which we perform under the guidance, and the impulses, of grace. But, since the sanctity of every action is the operation of God, who himself creates it in us,—the church, for this reason, in the council of Trent, has adopted, as the expression of her faith, that saying of Saint Austin,—that, *in crowning the merit of his servants, God merely crowns his own works.*

I recommend it seriously to every lover of truth and charity, to peruse, at some length, the words of the above-mentioned council; in order that, instructed, and disabused, by them, he may divest himself of those false impressions, which, as a Protestant, he has too easily imbibed respecting our Catholic principles. "*Although we remark,*" say the fathers of this assembly, "*that the sacred Scriptures affix so much importance to good works, that Jesus Christ himself promises a reward even for a cup of cold water bestowed upon the poor; and that the apostle assures us, that momentary sufferings here shall produce an eternal weight of glory hereafter,—although all this be true, still, God forbid, that the Christian should confide, or glory, in himself, and not in the Lord; whose goodness towards men is so great, that he regards, as their merits, the very gifts, which Himself*

bestows upon them." Such is every where the doctrine of the council of Trent.

In another session, (the 14th, ch. viii.) this assembly teaches, that, *although we can do nothing of ourselves, we can yet do every thing through Him, who strengthens us: so that man has nothing, wherein to glory; nothing, wherein, as in himself, to place his confidence: but, that all his confidence and glory repose in Jesus Christ, in whom we live; in whom we merit; and in whom we satisfy; performing worthy fruits of penance,—fruits, which derive all their efficacy from Him; by Him, are offered to the Eternal Father; and through Him, accepted.* For these reasons it is, that, in all our prayers, we petition; in all our hopes, we trust; in all our acknowledgments, we return thanks, "*through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*" We loudly own, that it is in Him, and by Him alone, that we are pleasing to the Almighty. It is ignorance only, or else malevolence, that has presumed to impute any other opinion to us.

In the sacrifice of the mass,—so completely is all our hope of salvation centered in our divine Redeemer,—we, every day, address the following prayer to God: *Vouchsafe, O God, to grant to us sinners, thy servants, who confide in the multitude of thy mercies, some portion, and fellowship, with thy blessed apostles and martyrs; into whose society we intreat thee to admit us; not induced by our merits, but forgiving us by thy grace, in the*

name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.—How singular, then, it is, and how great the misfortune, that the prejudices of the Protestant against his own parent church should be such, that neither the explanation of our faith; neither the decisions of our councils; nor the prayers of our sacrifice, will induce him to believe, that we place all our trust in Christ Jesus; that from Him alone, we derive life; and to Him alone we look up for eternal happiness.

So great, in fact, is the confidence, which animates those children of God, who walk faithfully in his paths, that it produces "*a peace,*" as the apostle expresses it, "*which surpasseth all understanding.*" However, notwithstanding that such be its effect; or although this blessed hope be stronger than the promises, and the threatenings, of the world,—sufficient even, to calm the uneasiness of the conscience,—still, it does not entirely extinguish fear: because, spite of the assurance, which we have, that God never abandons us, of Himself, we are, yet, never completely certain, that, through our own fault, by the rejection of his inspirations, we may not unhappily chance to lose him. By this salutary fear, his wisdom is pleased to temper that confidence, which his goodness excites in the hearts of his children. For, as St. Austin observes, "such is our weakness in this scene of dangers, and temptations, that security,—complete security,—would produce in us a

spirit of pride, and relaxation: whereas, this salutary fear,—which, according to the precept of the apostle, *makes us work out our salvation with trembling*,—renders us vigilant; and with an humble dependence attaches us to Him, *who*, as Saint Paul says likewise, *worketh in us, by his grace, both to will, and to do, his good pleasure.*"

Thus, therefore, I have explained the most essential points in the doctrine of justification. The Protestant is unreasonable, who refuses to acknowledge, that its obvious tendency is, to teach the Christian to refer the whole glory of his salvation to God, through the mediation, and influence, of Jesus Christ.*

If, after all this explanation, the enemies of our religion endeavour to screen themselves, as they often do, beneath the shelter of some subtilty,—I will, in such case, make this observation to them, that it is extremely inconsistent in them to invent so many difficulties

* If the reader will consult the writings of the modern divines of the established church, on the subject of good works, he will find, that there is hardly a shade of difference,—often there is no difference whatever,—between their doctrine, and ours. The dissenters frequently notice this;—reproaching them with teaching,—as here they do,—the tenets of Popery.

I will, however, at the same time, make this observation, that, whilst the members of the establishment defend good works, they contradict the eleventh article of their creed;—just as this article itself contradicts the Scripture. For while, with us, after St. James, they declare, that "*a man is* NOT *justified by faith* ONLY,"—their eleventh article declares positively, that "*we* ARE *justified by faith* ONLY."

in *our* regard, whilst in regard of each other, and in particular in regard of the Lutherans, on the subjects of grace and predestination, they allow so much latitude, and freedom. Their mutual concessions to one another, upon a great variety of contested questions, ought doubtlessly to prompt them to require nothing from the Catholic, beyond what is essential to the fundamentals of Christian piety.

Could the Protestant, indeed, be induced to confine himself within these bounds, then would he soon be reconciled to Catholic doctrines; and he would cease to reproach us with the odious imputation of annihilating the grace of God, by attributing every thing to our own good works. Our doctrine upon this subject consists, as I have clearly demonstrated from the council of Trent, in the three following propositions:—first, *that our sins are pardoned by an act of pure mercy, on account of Jesus Christ;* secondly, *that we are indebted to the operation of a gratuitous liberality for that justice, which is in us by the influences of the Holy Ghost;* thirdly, *that whatsoever good works we do, they are, all of them, the effects of grace.*

Hence, it is a fact, that the most enlightened members of the Protestant community, unlike the first reformers, no longer now, contest the wisdom of our principles. They even candidly now acknowledge, that it was wrong to break asunder the bands of unity, on account of the question of justification.—Now, if this

be the case; and if this important article, which was once considered the leading motive of the Reformation, be, at present, no longer, by the wisest, looked upon as capital,—let me, in this case, just ask the Protestant to judge,—what he ought, in reason, to think of his separation from the parent church? There is little room to doubt, but that, if men would lay aside their prejudices, and resign the spirit of contestation, peace would, ere long, be the fruit of the fortunate revolution.

CHAPTER IX.

ON SATISFACTION.

Our doctrine respecting the satisfaction, which is due to God for sin, is another of those questions, which demands a few words of explanation; in order that no doubt may remain upon it in the minds of our dissenting brethren.

The belief, therefore,—the unanimous belief,—of Catholics respecting satisfaction, is this,—that Jesus Christ, at once both God and man, was, alone, in consequence of the infinite dignity of his person, capable of offering up to God a sufficient atonement for the sins of his guilty creatures. Having, however, done this,—and done it even superabundantly,—it was in his power to apply the benefit of such expiation, in two different ways: either, in the first place, by an act of entire abolition, with-

out the reservation of any punishment whatsoever; or else, by the commutation of a greater punishment into a lighter; that is, by the exchange of eternal sufferings into temporal ones. The former of the two methods is the most complete; and at the same time, the most conformable to the notions of infinite goodness. And for these reasons it is, that God applies it, in the first instance, in the sacrament of baptism. The latter is that, which, we believe, he makes use of in the forgiveness of those sins, which are committed after baptism; being compelled, as it were, to this diminution of his tenderness, by the ingratitude of those, who have thus abused the first benefits of his mercy. They are, consequently, obliged to endure a certain process of temporal punishment; although that, which is eternal, has been kindly remitted to them.*

* Our first parents; the Israelites, in the desert; David, &c. sinned; and excited the divine displeasure. They repented; and God pardoned their sins. Still, he inflicted upon them a heavy weight of temporal chastisements. See Genesis iii. Numbers xiv. 2nd Kings xii.

Joel ii. 12. *Therefore, now saith the Lord, be converted to me, with all your hearts, in fasting, and weeping, and mourning.*

Ezechiel xviii. 30. *Be converted; and do penance for all your transgressions; and your iniquity shall not be your ruin.*

Romans viii. 17. *We are heirs indeed of God, and coheirs with Christ;* PROVIDED *we suffer with him, that we be also glorified with him.*

Colossians i. 24. *I fill up the things, that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.*

As for the opinion of the Fathers,—even of the most early Fathers, respecting the article of satisfaction, this is

It would, however, be wrong to infer from these principles, that Christ Jesus has not satisfied completely for us. He has done so: and the inference, which the above principles present, is, on the contrary, this,—that, having by the infinite price, which he has paid for our salvation, acquired an absolute dominion over us, he, for this reason, forgives us, upon such conditions; under such laws; and with such restrictions, as, to his wisdom, appear most appropriate, and becoming.

It would even be an act of injustice, and ingratitude, did we dare to contest with our beneficent Redeemer the infinitude of his merits, under the illusive pretext, that, forgiving the sin of Adam, he has not, at the same time, released us likewise from all its consequences; leaving us still subject to death, and to a variety of infirmities, both corporal and spiritual, which that offence had called down upon us. It is enough, that his goodness has paid, once, that ransom, by which we shall, one day, be delivered from all those evils, which distress us now. It is ours, to receive with gratitude,

toc notorious to require any attestations to point it out. The Centuriators,—the best Protestant vouchers, because the most learned,—upon this, and similar subjects, allow, that the doctrine of satisfaction was taught, even in the second and third centuries. *In the third century*, they say, *when the Fathers speak of penance, they speak chiefly of contrition, and satisfaction.* (Cent. 3.)

The Lord, says St. Cyprian,—and this was the language of every other pastor,—*the Lord must be appeased by our satisfactions.* NOSTRA SATISFACTIONE PLACANDUS EST (L. de Lapsis.)

and humility, every token of his beneficence,—be they ever so small,—which his goodness is pleased to bestow; considering in these, the steps, by which, in his wisdom, he accelerates the work of our reconciliation; and displays, by a more striking manifestation, both the tenderness of his mercy, and the severity of his justice.

For reasons similar to the preceding, we ought not to be astonished, if He, who has shown so much lenity in baptism, should also, after the violation of our sacred promises, show himself more rigorous, and severe. It is reasonable; and even salutary to us, that God, whilst he remits both sin, and the temporal punishment, which sin had merited, should yet, by way of check, to restrain us within the boundaries of duty, demand from us some kind of temporal chastisement; lest, emancipated too soon from the bands of justice, we nourish a presumptuous confidence; and abuse the facility of obtaining pardon.

It is, consequently, in order to fulfil this obligation, that we are subjected to a certain series of painful duties,—duties, which, also, we are bound to comply with, in a spirit of deep humility, and contrition. It was the necessity of these labours of satisfaction, that compelled the church, during the early ages, to impose upon sinners those heavy mortifications, which we call *the canonical penances.*

When, therefore, now, the church imposes upon sinners any painful and laborious duties,

the act of performing these, is what we denominate *Satisfaction*. And when, in consequence of the extraordinary fervour, or piety, of the penitent, the church thinks proper to mitigate the severity of her discipline, this act of relaxation is the thing, which we term *an Indulgence*.

CHAPTER X.

ON INDULGENCES.

On the subject of Indulgences, the only doctrine, which the council of Trent proposes to us, as an article of faith, is,—*that Jesus Christ has imparted to his church the power of granting indulgences; and that the use of them is beneficial.** At the same time, the

* Matthew xviii. 18. *Amen, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*

1 Corinthians v. 3, 4, 5. In this passage, St. Paul excommunicates the man, who had been guilty of incest. But, in the second chapter of his second Epistle,—having been now informed of the sorrow and repentance of the criminal,—he tells the Corinthians, that he remits the punishment, which, lately, his wisdom had deemed so salutary. *Wherefore*, he says, *I beseech you, that you would confirm your charity towards him. And to whom you have forgiven any thing, I also. For, what I forgive, if I have forgiven any thing for your sakes, I have done it in the person of Christ.* This mitigation by Saint Paul is precisely what we mean by an indulgence.

In like manner, during the early ages of the church, it was the frequent practice among the bishops to grant, at the request of the martyrs, a remission of the canonical penances to those individuals, whose repentance was

council remarks, that, *although the use of them ought to be retained, still it should be retained with moderation; lest, by any unbecoming facility, the force of ecclesiastical discipline should become enervated, and relaxed;*—an observation, which proves, that the mode of dispensing indulgences is a mere point of ecclesiastical discipline.*

marked by peculiar fervour. Tertullian, in the second century; St. Cyprian, in the third; and many Fathers, and Councils, in the fourth and fifth ages, attest the frequency of this custom: whilst also they inform us, that, sometimes, without any solicitation from the martyrs, it was observed in favour of the sick, and the infirm. This relaxation, again, was exactly our indulgence.

* The Catholic is very far from denying, that indulgences have been abused. They have been abused, very often, and very grossly: and we lament the evil more feelingly, than the Protestant derides it. But, after all, where is the great room for wonder? For, what do not men abuse? They abuse every thing; and frequently, the best things the most. There is nothing here, that is completely screened from the intrusion of the human passions. The mischiefs, however, that have resulted from indulgences, did not arise from the nature itself of the institution, but from the perversity, and wickedness, of the individuals, who misapplied; and from the ignorance, and superstition of the men, who misconceived, them. An indulgence is not,—as the Protestant imagines,—an encouragement to sin. On the contrary, it implies, and presupposes, a sincere conversion from sin; a real detestation of vice; and a fixed determination to avoid it, for the time to come. It is not a dispensation from penance:—it demands penance. Not an exemption from acts of piety:—it requires prayer, mortification, humility, &c. In short, just like the act of St. Paul to the incestuous Corinthian; or like that of the early pastors in favour of the sick, and the peculiarly penitent, an indulgence is simply a remission, or mitigation, of those temporal punishments, which the sinner still owes to the eternal justice, even after the forgiveness of the guilt of his offences.

CHAPTER XI.

ON PURGATORY.

WHEN the faithful depart out of this world, in a state of grace and charity; but yet, with out having undergone those punishments, which, as a debt, were due to the severity of the divine justice,—in such case, it is their fate, we believe, to endure them in the life to come.* It is hence, that, at every period of

* 2 Machabees xii. 43, 44, 45, 46. *Judas, the valiant commander, having made a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead; thinking well and religiously, concerning the resurrection. For, if he had not hoped, that they, that were slain, should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered, that they, who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is, therefore, a wholesome, and holy thought, to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.*

1 Corinthians iii. 15. *If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.*

1 Peter iii. 19, 20. *He went also, and preached, to those spirits, that were in prison; which had been sometime incredulous*

Matthew xii. 36. *I say unto you, that every idle word, that men shall speak, he shall render an account thereof at the day of judgment.*

I need not, here, cite any passages from the holy Fathers: because, upon this article, their agreement with our belief is acknowledged by the most learned, and enlightened, Protestants.

Let not, for example, says Dr. Forbes, *let not the ancient practice of praying, and making oblations, for the dead, received throughout the universal church of Christ, almost from the very time of the apostles, be any more*

Christian antiquity, the Christian universe was every where accustomed to offer up prayers, and alms, and sacrifices, for the faithful, who had died in the peace, and communion, of the church;—convinced, that these acts of piety were beneficial to their salvation. This is all, that the council of Trent proposes to our belief, respecting the souls, that are detained in purgatory. It decides nothing, concerning the nature of their punishments. Upon this, and such like questions, the holy Council prescribes the most prudent reserve, and circumspection; condemning those, who pretend to speculate on so awful, and obscure, a subject.

CHAPTER XII.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In the preceding chapters, I have briefly explained, what the nature of our doctrine is,

rejected by Protestants, as unlawful, or vain. Let them reverence the judgment of the primitive church; and admit a practice strengthened by the uninterrupted profession of so many ages. (Discourse on Purgatory.)

Nay, says Dr. Taylor, *we find by the history of the Machabees, the Jews did pray, and make offerings, for the dead....This practice was at first, and universal; it being plain in Tertullian, Cyprian, and others.* (Liberty of Prophesying.)--Hence we find, that some of the most distinguished members of the establishment,--Sheldon, Blandford, Barrow, Thorndyke, &c.--were wont, like the Catholic, to pray for the dead. *Indeed*, say the Encyclopedists, *the belief in purgatory is now—by one of those strange revolutions to which the human mind is subject—becoming the general belief of Protestants.*

respecting those *satisfactions*, which the Protestant rejects; or impeaches in us, as criminal. If, after such explanation, it be still contended, that we do an injury to the merits of Christ,—I must, in this case, remark, that the man, who makes this objection, must, surely, have forgotten, that our belief is, as I stated it,—"that this benevolent Redeemer has paid the entire price of our ransom; that to this price, since it is infinite, there is nothing wanting; and that as for the punishments, which I have been speaking of, the reversion of these does not proceed from any deficiency in the atonement, but from a certain regulation of things, which the divine wisdom has established, in order to restrain mankind from sin by the checks of fear; or by the influences of a salutary discipline."

Or, if we be still reproached with the imputation of believing, that we can, of ourselves, make satisfaction for a certain portion of the punishment, which is due for our offences, we can with confidence, to such accusation reply,—that, even by the evidence of the few maxims, which I have just established, it is groundless, and unjust. Those maxims do, certainly, very plainly attest, that we consider the work of our salvation, as the pure effect of the divine grace, and mercy; that whatsoever we do by the grace of God is not less God's, than what Himself does by his own absolute will; in short, that every thing, which we give to God, belongs equally to God, as

does that, which his own goodness bestows upon us. And, to these principles of our faith, let me add this one further observation,—that what, in imitation of the whole primitive church, we now call "satisfaction," is, after all, nothing more nor less than the mere application of the infinite satisfaction of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In like manner, the same consideration precisely ought to satisfy; or at least silence, those, who affect to be scandalised at us, when we say, that "God so loves the virtue of fraternal charity, and the communion of the saints, as to receive frequently, with pleasure, the satisfactions, which we offer to him in behalf of one another." It would indeed seem, that the Protestant does not properly conceive, either how all, that we are, is God's; nor how all the benefits, which His mercy confers upon those, who are the members of Jesus Christ, ought essentially to be referred, as so many tributes, to His greatness. But surely, those men, who have read, and reflected, that God himself inspires his servants with the desire to punish themselves by fasting; and piously to weep in sackcloth and ashes, not for their own offences merely, but for the sins likewise of the public, —surely, the men, who have considered this, will not be astonished, if also we assert, that, moved by the love of gratifying his favourite creatures, He is pleased moreover to accept, in his mercy, the sacrifice of their voluntary mortifications, in extenuation of those chas-

tisements, which, in his justice he had prepared to inflict upon the guilty. It is thus, that, satisfied with the former, he is induced to relent towards the latter,—honouring, in this communion of his members, and in this holy society of his mystic body, his own divine Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

The plan of my instruction, as well as the order of our doctrine, require, that I should now say something concerning the holy sacraments,—those important mediums, by which the merits of Christ are applied to the souls of Christians. Since, however, the disputes, which the Protestants have excited upon these objects, are,—with the exception of what relates to the eucharist,—less violent than those, which they have created upon several other questions, I shall, for this reason, confine my explanation to a rapid elucidation of the principal objections, which they have made to the other sacraments,—reserving to the end of my work, as its most interesting part, what relates to the holy eucharist.

The sacraments, then, of the Christian covenant are not only sacred signs, representative of grace; not only seals, which ensure, and confirm, grace to us,—they are, moreover, the instruments of the Holy Ghost, which apply

it to the souls of men; and which even, by the efficacy of the words, and the virtue of the action, which are then made use of, do actually,—provided we be properly disposed,—confer the divine gift upon us.

When God attaches so signal a benefit to the application of external signs,—objects, which, of their own nature, bear no proportion to so wonderful an effect,—His wisdom, in such case, takes care to show us, that, besides whatever we can do in ourselves by the goodness of our own dispositions, there must still necessarily intervene, for the effect of our sanctification, a special operation of the Holy Ghost; and a particular application likewise of the merits of Jesus Christ,—a blessing this, which the sacraments are designed to point out to us. It is, indeed, impossible to reject these principles, without injuring, at the same time, the merits of Jesus Christ; and without depreciating the work, which the divine greatness has created for the purpose of our regeneration.

We admit seven signs, or ceremonies, instituted by Jesus Christ, as the ordinary mediums of our sanctification; and as the principles of the perfection "of the new man."* The divine establishment of these objects is mani-

* *The belief of seven sacraments*, says Calvin, *has always been common amongst men; and so much maintained in sermons, and controversies, that their antiquity is rooted in the hearts of all, and is still fixed there.* (Inst.)

fest in the holy Scriptures, either from the express word of Jesus Christ, who instituted them; or else, from the effusion of those graces, which, according to the same sacred volume, are appended to them; and which point out necessarily the order of the divine economy.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON BAPTISM.

Not only are infants incapable of supplying for the want of Baptism by acts of faith, hope, and charity,—they are unable to do this, even by the desire of the salutary institution. Hence, it is our belief, that, if they do not receive it in reality, they do not, of course, participate in the benefit of our redemption; and that, dying in Adam, they enjoy no inheritance in Jesus Christ.*

* Matthew xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

John iii. 5. *Except a man be born again of water, and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Acts ii. 38, 39. *Be baptised every one of you,—for, the promise is unto you, and to your children.*

Thirty-nine Articles. Artic. ix. *Original sin,.... in every person born in this world, deserveth God's wrath, and damnation.* On this account, the twenty-seventh article ordains, that *the baptism of children be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.*

It may be proper to remark likewise in this place, that, in relation to the absolute necessity of infant baptism, not the Lutherans alone, but the chief part of the Protestant community, profess the same doctrine, as does the Catholic; and are even just like the Catholic, astonished, that any one should have presumed to deny the important truth,—a truth, so deeply engraved upon the public mind, that, before Calvin, not a single individual had ever, as yet, so far presumed, as to call in question its reality.

It is, therefore, an afflicting circumstance, to observe, that, notwithstanding the certainty, and the admission likewise, of this truth, there are multitudes of Protestants, who,—if the opportunity be not convenient,—suffer their infants, just like the children of infidels, to die unbaptised; without having imprinted upon them any mark of Christianity; or without having imparted to them any one of the benefits of their redemption.

CHAPTER XV.

ON CONFIRMATION.

The imposition of hands, as it is related to have been practised by the apostles, in order to strengthen the faithful against the rigours of persecution, is another institution, which we

revere as a Christian sacrament.* We do this because its principal effect is to introduce the Holy Ghost into the soul; and to create in the heart an effusion of his gifts, and graces. The pretext for rejecting this sacred action, because the Holy Spirit does not now visibly descend upon us, is unreasonable, and groundless. Hence, have all Christian churches, since the time of the apostles, religiously retained, and practised it;†—making use, in its administration, by way of expressing its virtues,—of chrism:‡—for, chrism is an emblem of the interior unction of the Holy Ghost

* Acts viii. 14, 15, 16, 17. *Now, when the apostles, that were in Jerusalem, had heard, that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John: who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For, he was not, as yet, come upon any of them; but they were only baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them; and they received the Holy Ghost.*

Acts xix. 5, 6. *Having heard these things, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them.*

† *Confirmation ought to be administered by bishops,.... its institution being apostolical, and consonant to the ancient practice of the church.* (Protestant Synod of London. Canon 60.)

‡ *It was the custom*, says the Centuriators, *to impose hands upon those, who were baptised; and to imprint upon their foreheads, with chrism, the sign of the cross.* (Cent. 7.)

It is necessary, Saint Cyprian says, *that he, who has been baptised, should be, moreover, anointed; in order that having received the chrism, that is, the unction, he may be anointed in God; and possess the grace of Christ.* (Ep. L. xx.)

CHAPTER XVI.

ON PENANCE, AND SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

It is an article of our belief, that it has pleased the wisdom of our Redeemer, that those, who, by baptism, have subjected themselves to the authority of the church, but, who, since the benefit of this sacrament, have violated the laws of the Gospel, shall be amenable to the tribunal of penance; wherein, exercising a power divinely entrusted to her, she either remits, or retains, the guilt of our offences.*

Chrism, adds the learned Lecturer, Dr. Hey, *was enjoined by the Council of Laodicea, in the year* 367 (Vol. iv. p. 286.)

* Matthew xvi. 19. *And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*

Matthew xviii. 18. *Amen, I say to you: whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.*

John xx. 21, 22, 23. *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*

To the largest portion of the Protestant community,—the Lutherans,—the sense of the above texts has appeared so manifest, that, with us, they rank Penance among the number of their sacraments. *As for Absolution*, says Melancthon, *there is no doubt about it. For, it is evident that we retain it in our churches: and approve, and de-*

So general are the terms of the commission, which Christ Jesus has given to the ministers of the church to absolve the penitent from their iniquities, that it would be rashness to pretend to confine it solely to public sinners. And since, on the occasions when they pronounce absolution in His name, they merely observe the precise terms of this said commission,—the consequence is, that the judgment, which they then pass, is considered as being passed by Jesus Christ himself, in whose room they are the established judges. It is this invisible Pontiff, who interiorly absolves the penitent, whilst the priest exercises the external ministry.

The sacrament of penance, if administered, not as the Protestants usually administer it, by a general declaration of pardon, but, after a particular investigation, and confession; and

fend, it. (Acts of Ratisbon, Art. xi.) See also the Augsburg Confession.

In this country, although the Establishment do not name Penance, as one of its sacraments, yet, by an inconsistency, which no wisdom can explain, it acknowledges in its clergy the same power of absolving sinners, which we do; and a power, which must be exercised precisely in the same manner, as it is done in the Catholic church,—with the same process of Confession, and the same form of pardon. See, in the Common Prayer Book, the Rubric for the Visitation of the Sick; and the Exhortation before communion.

The Centuriators, acknowledge the antiquity of the belief in Penance; as well as the early practice of confession. "*Private confession,*" they own, "*was practised, in the time of Saint Cyprian.*" (Cent. 3.) Hence, I need not cite here any testimonies from the Fathers.

by a real absolution, in the name, and authority, of Jesus Christ;—the sacrament of penance, if administered thus, is a powerful barrier against the licentiousness of the passions; a fruitful principle of enlightened counsel; and, under the uneasiness, which sin creates, the most pleasing source of confidence, and consolation.* All this is so certainly the fact, that I wonder much, that our Protestant brethren do not seriously regret the loss of such advantages; and even that they are not ashamed of a reformation, which has annihilated to them one of the most salutary, and sanctifying, practices of Christian piety.†

CHAPTER XVII.

ON EXTREME UNCTION.

The Holy Ghost, according to the testimony of Saint James, has attached to extreme unction the express assurance, that it shall both remit the sins, and alleviate the sufferings, of

* *Private confession*, says Luther, *pleases me wonderfully. It is useful; yes, it is even necessary. I rejoice, that it is practised in the church of Christ. For, it is the only remedy for an afflicted conscience.* (De Captiv. Bab.)

† It is, indeed, true, that multitudes of Protestants have lamented the abolition of confession; attributing to this, the dreadful inundation of vice, which burst upon society, at the era of the reformation. There were even some Protestant cities, that solemnly solicited the re-establishment of the holy institution. The appeal from Strasburg, in particular, is curious.

the sick individual, who receives it worthily.* The holy ceremony, therefore, wants nothing to render it a real, and perfect, sacrament. It is true, indeed, as the council of Trent remarks, that the penitent, who receives the holy unction, is benefited in the soul more effectually, than he is relieved in the body. The reason is,—because spiritual advantages are the chief objects of the law of grace; and

*Saint James v. 14, 15. *Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and, if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

Mark vi. 12, 13. *And going forth, they preached, that men should do penance. And they cast out many devils; and anointed with oil many, that were sick, and healed them.*

I acknowledge, says Calvin, *that extreme unction was used by the disciples of Christ, as a sacrament: for, I am not of the opinion of those, who imagine, that it was a corporal remedy.* (Comment. in Ep. Jac.)

Extreme unction was retained, for some time, in this nation, by the established church. *And might we not*, says the Lecturer, Dr. Hey, *adopt some ceremony in the visitation of the sick, analogous to that mentioned by Saint James? For my own part*, he continues, *I know not whether such an alteration would not seem to me an improvement.* (Vol. iv.)

To Luther there seemed to be no other means of getting rid of extreme unction; nor any other apology for denying it to be a sacrament, except that of rejecting, at once, the Epistle of Saint James. Accordingly, (what did not the boldness of Luther dare?) he did so. He rejected the Epistle,—calling it, "*an epistle of straw.*" His profaneness was, no doubt, exceedingly criminal. But, after all, I think his consistency was greater than that of those men, who, retaining the Epistle, still reject the sacrament.

those, which, if we be properly disposed, we ought always most confidently to look for in this salutary institution. In regard to the relief, which, frequently, it affords to our corporal maladies,—this it confers, merely in the view to our eternal welfare; according to the hidden designs of God's providence; and to those different degrees of faith, and preparation, which inspire and animate the faithful, who receive it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON MATRIMONY.

WHOEVER reflects upon the circumstances, that Christ Jesus has imparted a new form to Matrimony, reducing this holy union to the society of two individuals, immutably, and inseparably,* linked together; and that this indissoluble union is, moreover, the emblem of his own eternal union with his church;†—

* Matthew xix. 5 *For this reason, shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.*

Matthew xix. 6. *What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*

† Ephesians v. 31, 32. *For this cause, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall stick to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak, in Christ, and the church.*

The Protestant acts of Ratisbon, drawn up principally by Melancthon, and generally approved of by the reformed churches, say: *Moreover, the sacrament of Matrimony belongs only to Christians. It is a holy and constant*

whoever reflects upon these circumstances, will, without any difficulty, comprehend, that the marriage of the faithful is sanctioned by the Holy Ghost; and accompanied by the gift of grace. He will even praise the divine goodness, which, in this manner, has been pleased to consecrate, and sanctify, the principle of our nativity.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON HOLY ORDER.

Since the imposition of hands, as it is received by the ministers of sacred things, is accompanied by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, and by the infusion of a powerful grace,—it ought, hence, to be ranked amongst the number of the Christian sacraments.* This is so manifestly consistent, that not even do the Pro-

union of one single man with one single woman, confirmed by the blessing and consecration of Jesus Christ. (Art. xvi. De Sacram. Matrim.)

Matrimony, says Luther, *is called a sacrament, because it is the type of a very noble, and very holy thing. Hence*, he adds, *the married ought to consider, and respect the dignity of this sacrament.* (De Matrimonio.)

* 1 Timothy iv. 14. *For which cause, I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands.*

Acts vi. 6. *These they set before the apostles; and they, praying, imposed hands upon them.*

Acts xiii. 3. *They, fasting, and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away.*

testants neglect the consecration* of their own ministers. What they do, is merely to exclude order from the class of those sacraments, "which are common to all the faithful." (Conf. Art. 35.)

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE REAL PRESENCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

I AM now come to the important article of the Eucharist,—a subject, upon which it will

* The acts of Ratisbon, again,—which, I just remarked, the Protestants in general have approved,—say, in relation to order:—*There is this distinction between the sacraments, conferred in the church by the public ministry; and which, by this divine function, confer grace upon the faithful, that some of them, such as baptism, order, the eucharist, and absolution,—without which the church does not subsist,—are more august, and important, than the others; which, though very useful, and necessary, when administered, and received, religiously, are not, yet, so necessary as are the former.* (Art. xi. De Sacram. Ordinis.)

I have no objection, says Calvin, *that men receive the imposition of hands, as a sacrament. It is a ceremony, taken in the first instance, from the scriptures. Neither is it, as Saint Paul says, "vain, or superfluous;" but a faithful sign of spiritual grace.* (Inst. l. i. cap. 19.)

In this country, order is every where, by the members of the established church, considered a divine institution; a principle of grace; and an essential qualification for the performance of spiritual functions. *It is*, says Archbishop Wake, *a divine institution; and we do not at all doubt, but the grace of God accompanies this ordinance.* (Principles) Why, therefore, with the whole of Christian antiquity, not own it, at once, a sacrament?

be necessary for me to explain our doctrine, a somewhat more at length: although, still, I shall not exceed those limits, to which it is my plan to confine my present instructions.

The real presence, then, of the body and blood of our Lord in this holy mystery, is established, very solidly, and very satisfactorily, by the words themselves, employed in its institution,—THIS IS MY BODY.* These words

* Matthew xxvi. 26, 27, 28. *And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread; and blessed; and brake; and gave it to his disciples; and said: Take ye; and eat:* THIS IS MY BODY.—*And taking the chalice, he gave thanks; and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of this:* FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR MANY, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24. *And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and, blessing, brake; and gave it to them; and said:—Take ye;* THIS IS MY BODY.—*And having taken the chalice; giving thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said to them:* THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR MANY.

Luke xxii. 19, 20. *And taking bread, he gave thanks; and brake, and gave it to them, saying;* THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU. *Do this for a commemoration of me.—In like manner, the chalice also, after he had supped, saying, This is the chalice of the New Testament, in my blood, which shall be shed for you.*

1 Corinthians xi. 23, 24, 25, 26. *For, I have received of the Lord that, which also I delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night, in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, brake it; and said: Take ye, and eat:* THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH SHALL BE DELIVERED FOR YOU. *Do this for a commemoration of me.—In like manner, also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink it, for a commemoration of me.*

we interpret literally. Neither ought we to be any more questioned, why we attach ourselves to their natural, and obvious, signification, than the traveller should be asked, why he keeps the high road. It is theirs, who have recourse to a figurative sense; and who take by-ways, to account for the motives, and peculiarity, of *their* conduct. For our parts,

I should have wished, Luther says, *to have denied the real presence of Christ in the eucharist, in order to incommode the papists. But, so clear, and so strong, are the words of Scripture, which establish it, that, spite of my inclination, and although I strained every nerve to do so,—yet, never could I persuade myself to adopt the bold expedient.* (Ep. Car. Amic.)

Instead of producing the testimonies of the fathers, respecting this article of our belief, I will cite,—the attestation is particularly striking,—the acknowledgment of the chief reformer, upon the subject: *Among the fathers*, he says, *there is* NOT ONE, *who entertained a doubt, concerning the real presence of Christ Jesus in the holy Eucharist.* (Defens. Verb. Cœnæ.) He calls the contrary opinion, *blasphemy; an impeachment of the veracity of the Holy Ghost; an act of treachery against Christ; and a seduction of the faithful.* (Ibid.)

In this country, the belief in the real presence was *once*, and that too, for a very considerable space of time,—during the reigns of Elizabeth, and James, and the two Charles,—the prevailing opinion of the established church. *We believe*, says Bishop Andrews to Bellarmin, *a real presence, as much as you do. The difference*, adds Bishop Montague, *betwixt us, and the Popish writers, is only about the manner of Christ's presence in the blessed Eucharist.* (Appeal.) In short, citing the general belief of the establishment, in his time, Archbishop Laud says: *As for the Church of England, nothing is more plain, than that she believes, and teaches, the true and real presence of Christ in the Sacrament.* (Conf. with Fisher.)

The above sentiments are, certainly, but simply consonant both to the language of the public catechism, and to

we see nothing in the words, which our Redeemer employed in the institution of the mystery, that seems to require a figurative interpretation. We, therefore, consider this a sufficient motive for deciding in favour of their plain, and proper, signification. But, we are even the more forcibly inclined to do this, when we come to consider in this divine mystery the design, and intention, of its sacred

the expressions of the prayers of the Common Prayer Book. In the former, to the question,—"*What is the inward part, or thing signified?*"—the answer is,—"*The Body and Blood of Christ, which are* VERILY, AND INDEED *taken, and received, by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper.*" In the latter, among other similar expressions, it is said: "*Grant us, therefore, so* TO EAT THE FLESH *of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ; and so* TO DRINK HIS BLOOD, *that our sinful bodies may be made clean, by his Body, &c. The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul. The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul, &c.*" Can any form of words express a Real Presence more clearly, or more accurately, than these do? In fact, they were intended to express it: for, it is the genuine belief of the established church.

But, what is *now* the belief of the established church, respecting this article of the Eucharist? God knows. For, neither, I am sure, can my ingenuity; nor, I suspect, any possible ingenuity, find it out. Nothing can be more obscure, nor more preposterous, than the writings of some of its clergy, upon this important question. They,—many of them,—make that a pitiful riddle, which the divine wisdom has made so plain. However, I believe, that the following fact is now certain,—that the far larger share of the established clergy,—differing entirely from their earlier predecessors, (the notions of error are always changing,)—are now, upon this article, completely Calvinistic; considering the Holy Eucharist, as little more than an empty figure. Thus, says Dr. Marsh, "*On many points I am a Calvinist. I am a Calvinist in the doctrine of the Eucharist.*'

Author. These are circumstances, which I shall endeavour to explain, as briefly as I can; and by the light of those principles likewise, which not the Protestant himself will, I conceive, undertake to call in question.

I therefore remark, in the first place, that these words of Christ, *Take, and eat; This is my body, which is given for you*,—establish the certainty of this truth,—that, in the same manner precisely as the ancient Jews were wont to unite themselves in spirit to the immolation of the victim, which was offered for them; and moreover, as a mark, that they had shared in its oblation, and partaken of its flesh,—just so, Christ Jesus, being Himself our victim, has ordained, that, in the Eucharist, the Christian, also, shall eat effectually of the flesh of the holy sacrifice; in order that the actual communication of the adorable aliment may be to us a perpetual memorial, that it was for our sakes, that He took flesh; and for our salvation, that He was pleased to immolate it.

In the next place, I observe, that God had forbidden the Jews (Lev. vi. 30.) to eat the flesh of the victim, which had been offered up for *sin*. He did this, by way of instructing them, that the real expiation of sin was not to be effected, either under the law; or by the blood of animals. And the people, by this prohibition, lived under a kind of interdict: since thus, they could not actually participate in the remission of the guilt of sin.

For a reason, therefore, precisely opposite to the above, it was proper, if not necessary, that the body of Jesus Christ, the true victim offered up for sin, should be really eaten by the faithful; in order, by such manducation, to show them, that, under the new law, the remission of sin was accomplished effectually.

God had likewise ordained, (Lev. xvii. 10.) that the Jewish people should not eat blood. The motive,—at least one of the motives,—of this prohibition was,—that *it is the blood, that maketh an atonement for the soul.*—(v. 11.) But, our Redeemer, on the contrary, commands us to drink His blood: because *his blood was shed for the remission of sins.* (Matt. xxvi. 28.)

Thus, therefore, the manducation of the flesh and blood of the Son of God is, in fact, just equally real at the holy table, as grace; as the expiation of iniquity, and the participation in the sacrifice of our redemption, are, under the new covenant, actual, and effective.

At the same time, since it was the design of our benevolent Redeemer to exercise the faith of his followers by this mystery; and to prevent, likewise, any repugnance, that might arise from eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, under their natural appearances,—it, for these reasons, became his wisdom to present the sacred aliments to us, concealed under some kind of veil. If, however, he were prompted by these motives to oblige us to eat the flesh of our Christian victim, in a

manner, which the divine wisdom did not prescribe to the Jewish people,—still, he ought not, upon this account, to deprive us of any share, either of its reality, or of its substance.

It was therefore, in order to fulfil the ancient figures; and by way of putting us into actual possession of the victim, which was offered up for sin, that Jesus Christ was, in his mercy, pleased to bestow his true body and blood upon us. This is even so incontestable, that the Protestants themselves are desirous, that, upon this point at least, we should be assured, their sentiments are precisely the same with ours. They, hence, are for ever telling us, that they do not, by any means, deny, either the real presence, or the real participation, of the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist.—However, this is a subject, which I propose to discuss hereafter: when, having explained our own doctrine, I will also lay open theirs. Meanwhile, I conclude,—that, if the simplicity of the declaration of our Saviour be such as to compel them to own, that it was really the design of this benificent Being to give us his true flesh, when he said, *This is my body*,—if this be the case, (and they own, it is) then ought they not to wonder, if, withholden by such evidence, we cannot bring our reason to conceive, that his words should be interpreted figuratively.

In fact, if the Son of God were so careful,—as he was,—to explain to his apostles, whatever he had taught them under the forms of

parables and figures, is it not manifest, that,—since to the foregoing words he affixed no explanation whatsoever,—it was, consequently, his intention, that mankind should understand them in their plain, and obvious, import? It is true, the Protestant pretends, that the thing explains itself: because it is notorious, they say, that, what Christ thus presents, appears only to be bread and wine. Preposterous, and feeble, reasoning! For, is not He, who speaks, possessed of a degree of authority, which is more than paramount to that of the senses, and superior even to all the powers of nature? There is not any greater difficulty for the Son of God to give his Body to us in the Eucharist, by simply saying, *This is my Body*, than there was to cure the sick woman, by saying to her, *Woman, thou art loosed from thy malady;* (Luke xiii. 12.)—than there was to preserve the life of the young man, by saying to his father, *Thy son is living;* (John iv. 50.)—than there was, in short, in remitting the sins of the paralytic, by merely telling him, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* (Matt. ix. 2.)

Without, therefore, perplexing ourselves about the means, by which the divine power of Jesus executes, what he announces,—what we do, is thus, respectfully to attach ourselves to his words. That Being, who does whatsoever he pleases,—by his *word* also performs whatsoever he speaks. It is far less difficult for the Son of God to bend the laws of nature

to obey his word, than it is for us to reconcile our reason to those singular interpretations, which infringe, by their violence, all the established rules of language.

By the established rules of language, we are instructed, that the sign, which represents any object naturally, receives, not unfrequently, the appellation of such object: because it recals naturally its idea to the imagination. The same kind of observation,—although with certain restrictions,—may be made, in relation to signs of *institution*, when these are generally received; and by habit, become familiar. But, to establish a sign, which, of its own nature, bears no reference, or analogy, to its object,—for example, a bit of bread to signify a human body;—or else, to give it a certain name, without giving, at the same time, any explanation of its meaning; and before any one, and much less the public, have agreed in its acceptation, (and this is what Jesus did, on the occasion of his last supper,)—to do this, is a thing, that is quite unheard of;—a thing, of which, neither the whole series of the sacred Scriptures, nor any instance in human language, supply one single example.

Accordingly, it is true, that, although indeed the Protestant theologians,—many of them,—apply to the words of Christ a figurative signification, yet are they not so obstinately attached to this, as not at the same time to own, that, when the benevolent Being made use of the

striking expression, he designed, in using it, to give us really his Body and his Blood.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE WORDS—DO THIS FOR A COMMEMORATION OF ME.

After having pointed out the sentiments of the church, respecting the words, *This is my Body*, I will proceed to explain, likewise, what her opinion is, concerning those, which Christ Jesus has appended to them.—*Do this for a commemoration of Me.*

The design, then, of the Son of God in this latter expression, is manifestly to induce, or oblige, us to bear constantly in our recollection that death, which he endured for the purchase of our salvation. It is from it, that Saint Paul concludes,—that "*we announce the death of the Lord*" in this mystery. Now, it ought not to be supposed, that the remembrance of the death of our Lord excludes the real presence of his body. On the contrary, whoever considers attentively the explanation, which I have just been giving, will conceive it manifest, that it is upon this real presence, that such commemoration, in fact, is founded. For, as the Jews, by eating of their peace-offerings, recalled to their recollection, that it was for their sakes, that the victim had been immolated,—just so, by eating the adorable flesh of our Christian sacrifice we too should be in-

duced to remember, that it was for our salvation that Jesus laid down his life. It is the participation, therefore, of this sacred banquet, that not only awakens in us the memory of his death; but confirms us, moreover, in the faith of the wonderful mystery. And so far is the solemn commemoration, which Christ here commands us to make, from excluding the presence of his flesh, that it is, on the contrary, upon the actual manducation of this adorable food, that he bids us, at our altars, found the tender remembrance of his sufferings. In reality, it is impossible for us to forget, that it was for the love of us, that He immolated his sacred body, when, each day, we see, that he still gives us the holy victim to be the food and nourishment of our souls. And is it not wrong in Christians,—under the pretext of celebrating the memorial of our Redeemer's passion,—is it not wrong, under the shelter of such apology, to suppress that very object, which, in the act of the holy commemoration, is precisely the most powerfully efficacious, and the most tenderly affecting? Ought they not rather to reflect, that Jesus does not merely command us to remember him, but to remember him, by eating his body and his blood? For, let only the sequel of his words, and the force of his expression be well noticed. Not only does he say,—as the Protestants appear to understand him,—that, in the Eucharist, the bread and wine are *a memorial* of his body and blood:—he says: and he reminds us of it,—that, by

doing what he prescribes, that is, by receiving his body and his blood, we do really recall the remembrance of him to our affections. Indeed, what circumstance is there, that can possibly awaken the dear remembrance with more effect? If the child remembers so feelingly the kindness of a parent, when he sees his tomb, —with how much tenderer love should our sensibility glow, when, under these sacred veils,—under this mystic tomb,—we possess, and behold, the very flesh of our divine Redeemer; that living, life-giving flesh; that blood, still warm with the love of us; and replenished with grace, and spiritual unction? Or, should the enemies of our religion still vainly persist in telling us, that " He, who commands us to remember him, does not bestow upon us the real substance of his body,"—if they tell us this, I, in return, will merely request them to agree at least amongst themselves. They assure us, for example, positively; and protest, that, in the Eucharist, they do not deny a real communication of the true substance of the Son of God. Now, if this assurance be serious, and their doctrine be not a mere illusion, the consequence is, that then they must necessarily say, as we do,—that the remembrance, or memorial, does not exclude every mode of presence; but that alone, which acts upon the senses. Thus, their answer would be precisely the same with ours: since we, when we say that Christ is present in the Eucharist, at the

same time, acknowledge, that he is not present under a form, which strikes the senses.

Should, then, the Protestant here ask us, why we do not believe it sufficient, that Christ should be present in the Eucharist, merely by faith; seeing, that we believe,—as we do,—that the senses have nothing to do with the mystery?—if the Protestant should ask this, our answer to him would be easy; and we should, without any perplexity, unravel the specious quibble.—It is therefore a very different thing to say, that "the Son of God is present in the Eucharist, by faith,"—from saying, that "it is, by faith, we know, that he is present in this mystery." The former mode of speaking implies nothing more than a mere moral presence: the latter points out a real one: both because faith is infallible; and because a real presence, made known to us by faith, is sufficient to produce "in the just man, who lives by faith," all those happy effects, which, I have just said, are always appended to it.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE PROTESTANT DOCTRINES RESPECTING THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Although I had undertaken to explain the doctrines solely of the Catholic church, in relation to the Holy Eucharist, yet will I also,—because the thing may perhaps be use-

ful,—present a short exposition of the sentiments of our Protestant brethren, upon the same important subject.* Such exposition, if considered attentively, will produce the fortunate effect, if not of staying, at least of answering, the many quibbles, and equivocations, to which they have recourse so often: whilst, moreover, it will, at the same time,

* It is a very singular, and a very striking, circumstance,—a circumstance, which, if prejudice did not darken the eye of reason, would astonish, and confound, the Protestant,—that the rejection of the two leading Catholic tenets respecting the Eucharist, and the adoption of the two leading Protestant tenets concerning the same mystery, were, both of them, *professedly* derived from the suggestions "of the prince of darkness!"

We have, in the first place, the authentic testimony of Luther, informing us, not only candidly, but triumphantly, that it was the above wise and enlightened monitor, who instructed, and convinced, him, that transubstantiation is an error; and engaged him to substitute the system of companation in its room. The conference between the two learned doctors upon the important subject is minutely described in all the early editions of the great Reformer's works.

In like manner, we have also the testimony of Zuinglius, express and formal, as that of Luther,—that it was the same skilful master, who kindly taught him, that the Real Presence is but a human invention; and that the Eucharist, in fact, is no more than a holy figure. The dialogue, again, between these two great divines is circumstantially related by Zuinglius, in his book *De Subsidio Eucharistiæ*.

I will make no reflections upon a subject, which, yet, presents room for so much reflection. But, is it not astonishing, that men,—the professed envoys of heaven,—should boldly have declared, that they had received their most important doctrines from the devil? And is it not more astonishing yet, that such doctrines, even *now*, (they are still the leading Protestant doctrines,) should be venerated as divine?

show, how very nearly, on some occasions, they have approximated to our Ca .olic principles.

There are two leading systems amongst the Protestants, in relation t the presence of Christ Jesus in the Eucharist. The f rmer teaches, that his body and blood are present in the mystery, merely "*in figure:*" the latter professes, that they are present "*in reality.*" I shall examine each of the two opinions, alternately.

It is, therefore, in the first place, a very prevailing notion amongst Protestants; and a notion, which they frequently inculcate,—that the great miracle of the Real Presence, which we Catholics admit, and venerate, is superfluous, and of no avail; and that it suffices for all the purposes of our salvation, that Jesus Christ has laid down his life for our reconciliation. This sacrifice, they again say, is sufficiently applied to us "*by faith:*" and this application "*by faith*," they still farther add, is sufficiently made known, and certified, to us, "*by the word of God.*" Or if, (they once more say,) if indeed there be any necessity of clothing this word in the forms of sensible signs, then it is enough to create, for our benefit, symbols, that are extremely simple,—such, for example, as water in the sacrament of baptism; without any necessity of calling down from heaven the body and the blood of our Great Redeemer.

To explain the sacrament of the Eucharist,

in this manner, is, no doubt, a very easy thing. However, it is a fact, that not even have the defenders of this system thought proper to abide by its maxims. They know, that notions, similar to the above, have induced the Socinians to deny the divine mystery of the incarnation. "God," say these unbelievers, "could, surely, save us, without having recourse to so arduous, and complex, a method. He needed but at once to forgive our iniquities: and, as for instruction, he could also instruct us sufficiently, both in regard of doctrine, and morality, by the words, and example, of a man, animated by the Holy Ghost; without any necessity of making such personage a God." But, here, the Protestants, as well as the Catholics, felt the palpable weakness of such arguments. They felt, in the first place, that it is not ours,—blind, and ignorant, as we are,—either to deny, or to maintain, any mystery, merely according to the circumstance of its appearing to us useful, or else unavailing, to our salvation. It is God alone, that knows the secrets of his own counsels. It is ours, to render them beneficial, and salutary, to ourselves, by believing them in that sense, in which his wisdom has proposed them to us; and by accepting his benefits, in that way, in which his goodness has been pleased to offer them. In the next place, without entering into the question, whether God could not have saved us by any other method, except that of the incarnation, and death, of his Son,—a

useless controversy, which many of the Protestants have long, in their schools, very ardently maintained,—it is enough for man, upon the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, to know, that the Son of God has, in his mercy, been graciously pleased to testify his love and interest for his creatures by effects, which are truly wonderful, and incomprehensible. It was the greatness of this love, that created that blessed union, by which he became man; and that prompted him, as really to lay down, for our sake, that same body, as he had really taken it up. These dispensations of the divine wisdom are, all of them, consistent: whilst the love, which suggested them, is every where strikingly impressive. When, therefore, it is His wish, by communicating himself to any one of his children, to testify to such happy individual that tenderness, which he has testified to all in general,—he discovers, at once, in the treasures of his wisdom, the easy means of satisfying his benevolence,—means, just equally effectual, as are those, by which he had accomplished the great work of our redemption. There is, consequently, no room for astonishment, if, in the infinitude of his power and goodness, he bestows upon each of us the real substance of his own flesh and blood. He does this, in order to imprint deeply upon our hearts, that it was for the love of us, that he took them up; and for our benefit, that he laid them down. The character of his life renders these in-

ferences credible. The order of his mysteries disposes us to reverence them: whilst his own positive declarations forbid every doubt respecting their infallibility. Neither were the Protestants themselves insensible, that mere simple figures, and simple emblems, of the body and blood of Christ could not satisfy the piety of Christians, who are familiarised to the mercies of a God, who so really bestows himself upon them. For this reason, they do not like to be accused of denying, in their system of the Eucharist, a real and substantial participation, when they communicate, of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. They, on the contrary, assert positively, as we do, that, in sharing the holy mystery, they participate truly "*of his proper substance.*" (Cat.) They even say, in their Confession of Faith, that "*Christ there feeds and enlivens us, by* THE VERY SUBSTANCE *of his body and blood.*" And conceiving, still farther, that it would not be sufficient to show us by a mere sign, that we have a share in his sacrifice, they, hence, expressly declare, that the body of our Saviour, which is given to us in the Eucharist, does really "*certify*" this blessing to us,—an expression, upon which, because it is remarkable, I shall, ere long, make a few observations.

It is, therefore, acknowledged by our Protestant brethren, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly present in the sacred mysteries. The Calvinists themselves allow

this. For, no doubt, what "*is communicated* IN ITS PROPER SUBSTANCE," must, of course, be truly present. It is true, they explain this communication, by saying, that it is made "*in spirit, and by faith.*" But, it is still true, that they maintain likewise, that it is "*real.*" And, because it is impossible to conceive, how a body, which is communicated only "*in spirit, and by faith,*" can yet be communicated "*really, and in its proper substance,*"—they have, for this reason, in the defence and explanation of a system, whose parts are so grossly inconsistent with each other, singularly wavered, and contradicted themselves. They have even been reduced to acknowledge two things, which can be true, only in the supposition of the certainty of our Catholic doctrines.

The first of these is,—that Jesus Christ is given to us in the Eucharist, in a way, which is neither applicable to baptism, nor to the preaching of the Gospel;—in a way, which is peculiar to this mystery. I shall remark, ere long, the consequence of this principle. But, first, let me observe, how it is conceded to us by our adversaries.

It is not my intention to appeal here to the testimony of any particular theologian. I shall cite the words only of their own catechism; in the article, wherein it explains what relates to the Eucharist. In this article, it is in the most positive terms asserted, that, in this mystery, Jesus Christ is given to us "*really, and in his proper substance.*" Whereas

both in baptism, and in the Gospel, although he be here truly communicated to us,—"*yet, it is only in part, and not completely.*" The consequence, therefore, is,—that, in the Eucharist, He is given to us completely, and not in part.

There is, certainly, a very great difference between the circumstance of receiving "*in part*," and that of receiving "*completely.*" If, therefore, upon all other occasions, Christ Jesus is but received "*in part;*" and it is only in the Eucharist, that he is received "*completely*,"—if this be the fact, it, of course, even in the acknowledgment of our adversaries, must follow,—that it is then, in the Eucharist, that the Christian ought to seek for a participation, which is peculiar to this sacrament;—a participation, which is not appropriate, either to baptism, or to preaching. At the same time, another consequence is,—that such participation is not the fruit, or appendage, of faith: since faith, animating generally all the actions of the Christian, extends equally to preaching, and to baptism, as it does to the action of communion.

In reality, it is a very remarkable circumstance, that, notwithstanding the desire, which the Protestants have manifested so often, of placing baptism, and preaching on an equality with the Eucharist,—because "Jesus Christ is in them communicated truly to us,"—yet, have they never, in their catechisms, ventured to assert, that in baptism, and preaching, He

is given to us "*in his proper substance;*" as he is given to us, they acknowledge, in the Holy Eucharist. For this reason, they felt the inconsistency of refusing to attribute to the Eucharist a manner of conferring Jesus Christ, peculiar to this sacrament: whilst also they were compelled to own, that faith, which is diffused through all the actions of the faithful, could not be this peculiar manner. It is, indeed, manifest, that the peculiar manner of possessing Jesus Christ in the Eucharist ought, of course, to be real: since the sacrament, as the Protestants allow, communicates "*really*" to us, even "*in its proper substance,*" the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. So that, in fact, from the very concessions of the Protestants themselves, the conclusion is manifest,—that there is in the Eucharist a real manner of receiving the body and blood of our divine Redeemer, which is not the effect of faith. This is precisely the doctrine of Catholicity.

The next thing, that the Protestants admit, is again deduced from their own catechism, in the article immediately succeeding that, which I have just been citing. In this article it is said, that "*the body of our Lord, Jesus, in as much as it was once offered up in sacrifice, in order to effect our reconciliation, is now given unto us, in order to certify to us, that we have a share in this reconciliation.*"

Now, if the foregoing words have any kind of signification; if they be not an empty sound, or a mere illusion;—their meaning is, that Je

sus Christ, in order "to certify" to us, that we share in his sacrifice, and in the benefit of our redemption, presents to us, not a symbol only, but his own real body. For, if the reception of the body of our Lord "certify" our participation in the fruits of his death, then must this participation, of course, be distinguished necessarily from the reception of his body: because thus the one is the pledge of the other. Wherefore, I remark, still further, that, if the Protestants be reduced to distinguish in the Eucharist between the participation of the body of Christ, and the participation in the fruit, and grace, of his sacrifice,—the consequence must manifestly be, that therefore they distinguish likewise, between the real participation of his sacred body, and that spiritual participation, which is made by the means of faith. For, surely, this latter kind of participation can never be the principle of two distinct, and separate, actions; by one of which, the Christian receives the body of Christ; by the other, the fruits of his sacrifice. Not even can any one conceive, what real difference there can possibly exist, between the participation "by faith" of the body of Christ, and the participation "by faith" of the fruits of his death. Hence, besides the communion, by which we participate spiritually of the body, and spirit, of Jesus Christ, on the occasions when we receive the fruits of his death,—besides this communion, there is, moreover, another real communion of the

body of this same Redeemer; a communion, which is a positive pledge of the security of the former;—if, by the criminality of our dispositions, we do not counteract the influences of so great a blessing. This consequence is included necessarily in the principles, which the Protestants themselves acknowledge. And never will they explain this momentous truth, in a way, that is any thing like wise, and consistent, until they resume the sentiments of that church, which they have so unhappily abandoned.

How very striking, therefore, is the force of truth! and what mind will not admire it! There is not a consequence, that results from the acknowledged principles of our dissenting brethren, but what is completely intelligible in the sentiments of the Catholic church. The Catholic,—even the most unenlightened Catholic,—without the slenderest difficulty, understands, that there is formed, by the medium of the Eucharist, a communion with Jesus Christ, which no other institution furnishes:—as he also easily understands this other circumstance,—that "*the Body of Christ is given to us, in order to certify to us, that we have a share in his sacrifice, and his death.*" In like manner, the Catholic knows how to make the clearest distinction between the two necessary methods of uniting ourselves to our divine Redeemer;—the one, by receiving his real Flesh; the other, by receiving his Spirit;—the former being established, as the pledge,

and security, of the latter. But, these are objects, that are inexplicable in the principles of our Protestant brethren: although, still, they are unable to disavow them. Hence, we must conclude, that it is the illusions of error, that have involved them in contradictions.

To me, it has, indeed, been always a subject of surprise, that the ingenuity of the Protestants has never yet furnished a more simple explanation of their doctrine relating to the Eucharist. For example, why have they not always, without so many quibbles, and evasions, persisted in the simple declaration, that, since Christ Jesus was pleased to shed his blood for our salvation, he was pleased moreover to ordain, that this effusion should be represented by the institution of two separate signs of his body, and his blood?—that to these signs he has given the name of the thing itself?—and that they are, still farther, the pledges of our participation in the fruits of his death; and the assurances, that we are spiritually nourished by the virtues of his body and his blood? After having laboured so indefatigably to prove, that signs do receive the name of the thing; and that, consequently, the sign of the body might, with propriety, be called the body,—it is to these two opinions, that they ought, in consistency, and most naturally likewise, to have adhered.

In order to render these signs efficacious, the only condition, that was required, was simply this,—that the grace of our redemption should

be appended to them; or rather, according to the maxims of Protestantism, that this grace should merely be confirmed to us, by their means. Needless it was entirely, to perplex themselves, as our dissenting brethren have done, in the unmeaning endeavour to make us comprehend, that we receive the very body of our Saviour, for the purpose solely of certifying to ourselves, that we share in the benefits of his passion. In the sacrament of baptism, they deemed the water a sufficient sign of that blood, which effaces iniquity: nor did they ever dream of asserting, that, in this institution, we receive "the proper substance" of the blood of Christ, for the purpose "of certifying" to us, that its virtue is thereby imparted to us. How much less obscure would their doctrine, then, have been, had they reasoned in this same manner, in relation to the Eucharist! But, it is the general fate of innovators to be reduced to suppress, or conceal, much of what, frequently, they would wish to say. They meet, for ever, with established truths, and unvarying maxims, which, perplexing them, oblige them to do violence to their reason. Thus, the Arians would have been glad, not to have given the name of "God," and "Only Son," to Jesus Christ. Thus, the Nestorians, in their writings, admitted with reluctance, in the same divine personage, an ill-defined, and imperfect, kind of unity. Thus, the Pelagians, in like manner, who denied original sin, would also, with satisfaction, have

denied, that baptism ought to be administered to infants, for the purpose of remitting their offences:—for, by this means, they would have got rid of the argument, which the Catholics borrowed from this practice, as another proof of the existence of original sin. But, the fact is, as I have just been remarking, that, when men find a truth once forcibly established, they have not the hardihood, usually, to venture to overturn it wholly.

Let, then, the Protestants own candidly the truth:—They were disposed, and would have been glad, to have admitted in the Eucharist the figure only of the body of Jesus Christ, with the real participation merely of his spirit;—leaving out those awful words, "*participation of his proper substance;*" along with several others, which, expressing a real presence, serve only to embarrass them. To them, and to their prejudices, it would have been peculiarly pleasing, not to have acknowledged in the Eucharist any other kind of communion with Jesus Christ, save that which is common to baptism, and to preaching; without telling us, as they reluctantly have done,—that, "*in this sacrament, men receive their Redeemer* COMPLETELY; *whilst, in other institutions, they receive him,* BUT IN PART." However, although inclination prompted the suppression of this sort of language, yet did the words of Christ,—so plain is their signification,—forbid it. Instituting the holy mystery, Christ Jesus had said distinctly,

—*This is my body: This is my blood,*— words which he never applied to any other object; nor used, on any other occasion. And how, therefore, pretend, with any thing like consistency, to attach generally to all the actions of the Christian, what his word attaches formally, and positively, to an individual sacrament? Moreover, the whole economy of the divine counsels; the order of the mysteries, and doctrines, of the Christian institute; the design of Jesus in the establishment of the Eucharist; even the very words, which he made use of, on the awful occasion; and the impression, which they are calculated naturally to make upon the mind,—all these are circumstances, which convey no other idea, than that of a real, and substantial, presence. It is upon these accounts, that our Protestant adversaries have been compelled to have recourse to words, which, in sound at least, give some confused notions of this kind of reality. When men, as the Catholics do,—attach themselves completely to the principles of faith; or else, like the Socinians, obey only the guidance of human reason,—in either of these two cases, it is easy to establish a regular system, and to form a fixed and connected plan of doctrine. But when, as the Protestants do, men form a compound of faith and reason, adopting a something of the principles of each;—the consequence is, that they are for ever saying more than they would wish to say; and then

falling into opinions, whose incoherency alone is the evidence of their falsehood.

Such as these have been the effects of the pretended Reformation;—God permitting them, it may be, for the purpose of facilitating to the Protestant his return to the bosom of his parent church,—the only centre of real unity. For, since experience has now convinced our separated brethren, that, in order to speak the language of truth, they are necessarily reduced to speak as we do,—ought they not, hence, in like manner, to conceive, that, in order to understand the truth itself, they should judge of it likewise, in the same way, that we do? In their creeds, they cannot help remarking a great variety of expressions, which, unless they be interpreted in a Catholic sense, present no meaning whatsoever. And is not this circumstance alone sufficient to convince them, that it is merely in the Catholic church, that the depositum of revelation subsists unaltered, and unimpaired? Those terms, and mutilated remnants, of our Catholic doctrines, which are interspersed here and there, throughout all their catechisms,—but which seem to beg, as it were, to be once more re-united to their parent-whole,—these are objects, which ought forcibly to urge every thoughtful Protestant to seek, in the communion of our divine establishment, the complete explanation of what relates to the Holy Eucharist. I am, indeed, convinced, that, if the perplexities of human reasonings did not confuse their faith,

and render it too dependent upon the senses;—I am convinced, if this were not the case, that there would be found very few, who would not, with eagerness, measure back their steps to the paths of our happy sanctuary.—But, having thus pointed out the effects, which ought to result from the exposition of the Protestant doctrines, I shall hasten to complete the explanation of our own.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION

It was proper, and consistent with the rules of the divine wisdom, as I have remarked already, that there should not exist in this mystery of faith, any thing, that the mortal eye can penetrate, or that the human senses can discover. For this reason, there ought not, after the act of consecration, to appear any visible alteration in the qualities of the sacred elements. It is because we do not perceive such alteration; because we still trace the same appearances, and witness the same effects; that we sometimes, and in a certain sense, still call the sacrament by the name of the veils, which cover it. However, conducted by His all-powerful word, who does whatsoever he pleases, faith acknowledges in the divine mystery, no other substance than that, which this same word expresses,—that is, the real body

and the real blood,* of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ; into which the bread and wine are, by his power, miraculously converted. It is this mysterious change, that, now, we express by the appropriate term,—*Transubstantiation.*

* John vi. 51. *The bread, that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.* Verse 55. *For, my flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed.*

Matthew xxvi. 26, 27, 28. *Take ye, and eat: This is my body.... Drink ye all of this: For, this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins.* See also, Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Corinthians x. 16; xi. 23, 24, 25.

So natural a consequence of the real presence is transubstantiation, that even the most inveterate enemies of our holy religion,—the Calvinists,—allow, that, if the former be admitted, the rejection of the latter is preposterous. "For," say the ministers in the synod of Czenger, "*as the rod of Moses was not changed into a serpent, but by transubstantiation; as water did not become blood in Egypt, or wine at Cana, without a change;—so, in the Eucharist, bread cannot become the body of Christ, if it be not changed into his flesh, by losing the substance of bread.*"—I could produce many similar attestations from the leading apostles, and ministers, of the Calvinistic community, who candidly, and forcibly acknowledge, that transubstantiation is the necessary appendage of the real presence. "*If,*" says Beza, "*men will take these words,* This is My Body, *in their literal sense, and without figure, it is impossible not to own, that they establish transubstantiation.*" (De Cœnâ Domini.)

For a considerable length of time,—even until the close of the reign of Charles I,—the divines of the church of England made, in general, very slender opposition to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. They, many of them, considered it as the most obvious method of accounting for the mystery of the Real Presence. What has chiefly contributed to introduce the aversion, with which men now view it, was the adoption of that barbarous act of policy, which declared our worship to be "*idolatrous;*" and compelled every individual bearing office, to *swear* solemnly,

Neither do the internal properties of the Eucharist prevent it from being, as to its external and sensible qualities,—*a sign*. But, it is a sign of such nature, that, so far from excluding the reality, it on the contrary, includes it necessarily: because these words, *This is my body*, pronounced over the elements, which Christ Jesus had selected to be the matter of the holy sacrament, are a sure sign to us, that He is really present under them.

that it is so. "*In all disputes, relating to that mystery, before the civil wars, the Church of England Protestant writers owned the Real Presence, and only abstracted from the* Modus, *or manner of Christ's body being present in the Eucharist; and therefore, durst not say, but it might be there by transubstantiation, as well as by any other way.... It was only of late years, that such principles have crept into the Church of England, which having been blown into the Parliament House, have raised continual tumults about religion, ever since. Those unlearned, and fanatical, notions were never heard of, till Dr. Stillingfleet's late invention of them, by which he exposed himself to the lash, not only of the Roman Catholics, but to many of the Church of England controvertists too.*" (Life of James II.)

"*Many Protestants*," says Bishop Forbes, "*deny too boldly, and too dangerously, that God can transubstantiate the bread into the body of Christ. For my part, I approve of the opinion of the Wittemburg divines, who assert, that the power of God is so great, that he can change the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.*" (De Euch.) Bishop Montague positively asserts, that a conversion takes place, by the power of the act of consecration; and he cites the Fathers to confirm his opinion. "*The Fathers*," he says, "*from age to age, attested the real and substantial presence, in very high terms: and they styled it, conversion, transmutation, transformation, transelementation*," *&c. &c.*

And, although, to the senses, things still appear as they had done,—yet, *now*, since a superior power has interfered, the mind forms a different judgment of their properties. Hence, notwithstanding that certain appearances, and a certain order of natural impressions made upon the body, are wont to point out to us the substances of bread and wine,—still, the authority of Jesus, whose word cannot deceive us, is the cause why, *now*, those very same appearances begin to exhibit to us a substance, that is completely different. Thus, do we not remark, that the apostle says,—*What we take, and what we eat, is His Body?*—Such is, indeed, the authority of the divine word, that it permits us not to refer those external appearances to the substance of bread; but engages us to affix them to the body of Jesus Christ, which is miraculously concealed beneath them. So that the presence of this adorable object being thus certified to us by this sign, we with piety bow down to worship it.

CHAPTER XXIV

ON THE ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST.

Respecting the adoration of this sacrament, I shall here say very little. The reason is,—because the most learned, and the wisest, of our Protestant adversaries have, long since, admitted, that its adoration is but the natural, and the necessary, consequence of the pre-

sence of Christ Jesus in this mystery.* It is our belief, moreover; and a belief, which is manifestly wise;—that, since the omnipotent words of our Redeemer operate whatsoever they announce,—they, hence, produced their effect, in the Last Supper, the same instant, in which they were uttered. The necessary consequence, again, of this, is,—that, therefore, we admit the real presence of the body of Jesus, before the act of its participation.†

* "*If Jesus Christ*," says Calvin, "*be present in the Eucharist,—then, no doubt, it is necessary to adore him there.*" (Contra Heshusium.) Beza is even quite indignant with this said Heshusius; and calls him very politely, "an ass," for having denied the obligation of adoring the Eucharist, on the supposition of the real presence.

"*The sounder Protestants*," says Bishop Forbes, "*make no difficulty about adoring Christ in the Eucharist. It is a very monstrous error of certain rigid Protestants to deny, that Christ is to be adored in the Eucharist, by any adoration, except that of the mind.*" (De Euch.)

"*With Saint Ambrose*," adds Bishop Andrews, "*I also adore the flesh of Christ in the Eucharist.*" (Resp. ad Bellarm.)

† The words of Christ,—*This is my body: This is my blood*,—were true, the moment, in which he pronounced them. Consequently, his body and blood must have been present, before the apostles either eat the adorable food, or drank of the heavenly cup. No inference can be more manifest. And for this reason, Luther himself decided,—that, "in the mass, Christ ought to be acknowledged, as present, from the beginning of the Lord's prayer, to the end of the communion,"—an interval, which, when the communicants are numerous, and the service solemn, includes, frequently, the space of an hour, or more. Now, if it be owned, that Christ is thus present, for an hour,—why should it not be admitted, that he may be present, for a day; a week; a year? We have the plainest attestation of the divine word, to prove his presence. We have not a syllable, to prove, or even to insinuate, his absence.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

THE mystery of the real presence, and that of transubstantiation, once established, and admitted,—there is hardly any further difficulty in establishing likewise, or admitting, the divinity of that great sacrifice, in which the holy Victim is offered up.*

* Malachy i. 10, 11. *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to my name,* AND A CLEAN OFFERING.

Matthew xxvi. 28. *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is* SHED *for many, for the remission of sins.*

Mark xiv. 24. *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is* SHED *for many.*

Luke xxii. 19. *This is my body, which is* GIVEN *for you. Do this, for a commemoration of me.*

Luke xxii. 20. *This is the chalice of the New Testament in my blood, which is* SHED *for you.*

1 Corinthians xi. 24, 25. *This is my body, which is* BROKEN *for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. This chalice is the New Testament in my blood: Do you this, as often as you shall drink it, for the commemoration of me.*

In these words of our Redeemer, reported by the apostles, there is manifestly question, in the first place, of an oblation, or *immolation*, by the actual effusion of blood, for the remission of sin; and, in the next place, of the *perpetuation* of this oblation to the end of time,—expressed by the command, *Do this for a commemoration of me.* Hence, we find, that the apostles were assiduous in offering up the holy sacrifice. *And as they were* SACRIFICING *to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them,* (Acts xiii. 2.) *The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And*

In the mystery of the Eucharist, I have already taken notice of two actions, which are really distinct, although the one bears a

the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? (1 Cor. x. 16.)

Instead of producing the testimonies of the Fathers, which invincibly prove, that these holy men, all cultivated, and adored, the sacrifice of the mass, precisely as the Catholic does at present,—instead of producing such testimonies, I will cite,—which perhaps is better,—the acknowledgments of our Protestant adversaries, respecting the opinion of those enlightened personages.

"*It is certain*," says Dr. Grabe, in his notes on St. Irenæus, "*that Irenæus, and all the fathers, either contemporary with the apostles, or their successors, whose works are still extant, considered the blessed sacrament to be the sacrifice of the new law. And this was not the private opinion of any particular church, but the public doctrine, and practice, of the universal church, which she received from the apostles; and the apostles, from Jesus Christ.*"

The Centuriators make frequently the same concession; at the same time, condemning the opinion, which they describe. *Saint Irenæus*, they say, *taught the new oblation of the New Testament, which the church, having received from the apostles, offers up to God, throughout the world.* (Cent. 2.) *Saint Cyprian*, they add, *says, that the priest performs the function of the vicar of Jesus Christ; and that a sacrifice is offered up to God the Father.* (Cent. 3.) *Tertullian*, they also complain, *makes frequent mention of oblations for the dead.* (Cent. 3.) *Ambrose*, they angrily own, *makes use of the very terms, which we do,—"to celebrate mass; to offer; to offer sacrifice, &c."* (Cent. 5.)

Even Luther himself, although he rejects the mass, still cites, in his letter to our Henry, the passages of the Fathers, attesting their veneration for it. But, the daring innovator triumphantly adds:—"*What care I for a thousand Austins, or a thousand Cyprians, &c.*"

"*We are wrongly accused*," says the Confession of Augsburg, "*of having abolished the mass. We have always continued, and celebrated it, with great respect.*" (Art. xxii.)

relation to the other. The former is the action of *consecration*, by which the bread and the wine are converted into the body and the blood of Christ; the latter is the *manducation*, by which we participate of the sacred food.

In the consecration, the body and the blood are mystically separated from each other: because Christ Jesus had separately said,—*This is my body: This is my blood*,—a circumstance, which presents to us a very lively, and an efficacious, representation of the violence of that death, which he was pleased to endure for our salvation.

Thus, by the power of these words, the Son of God lies revealed upon the altar; clothed in those symbols, which represent his death. Such is the efficacy of the solemn act of consecration. This sacred act is, moreover, a tribute of acknowledgment, offered up to God's sovereign majesty; in as much as, by it, Jesus Christ, who is here personally present, renews, in some respect, and perpetuates, the memorial of his own obedience even to the death of the cross. So that, in fact, there is nothing wanting to render it a real, and perfect, sacrifice.

Neither can it be doubted, that this holy action, although considered separately from that of the manducation,—is, of itself, peculiarly pleasing to the Almighty; and calculated powerfully, to induce Him to look down with an eye of pity upon the distress of his creatures. It thus replaces before him the

voluntary death, which this Beloved Son underwent for the sake of sinners: or rather, it thus replaces before Him, this Beloved Son Himself, under the emblems of that death, by which, once, his indignation was appeased.

The mere circumstance of the presence of Christ Jesus upon the altar, is, itself, as every Christian must acknowledge, a kind of intercession, extremely powerful with God, in favour of mankind,—according to that saying of Saint Paul, *Christ presents himself; and appears in the presence of God in our behalf.* (Heb. ix.) It is, therefore, our belief, that our benevolent Redeemer, present upon our altars under the symbols of death, intercedes there for us; and presents there continually for us to his Eternal Father that death, which he once suffered for the sanctification of his church.

It is in this sense, that speaking of the eucharistic sacrifice, we say, that Jesus Christ therein offers himself up to God in our behalf; and it is thus, that we believe, that the holy oblation disposes the divine goodness to be the more kind, and propitious, to us. Hence it is, that we give it the name of *propitiatory.*

When, indeed, we consider, what our Redeemer has done for us in this mystery; and when we contemplate him actually present upon the Holy Table, with all the marks of death imprinted on him,—we, of course, seeing him in this striking situation, endeavour to unite ourselves in affection to him: we offer

him up to the Eternal Father, as our only victim, and propitiation; protesting, that, except Him, and the infinite merits of His death, we have nothing worthy to be presented at the throne of the Almighty. It is by this sacred oblation, that we sanctify all our prayers; and, whilst we offer it to the divine Majesty, we also, at the same time, united to it, offer ourselves, through it, as so many living victims, before his throne.

Such is the character of our Christian sacrifice,—a sacrifice exceedingly different from the sacrifices of the Jewish law; a sacrifice, spiritual, and worthy of the sanctity of the new alliance; a sacrifice, in which the victim is seen only by the eye of faith; in which, the word is the sword, that mystically separates the body, and the blood: and in which, consequently, the blood is shed, but mysteriously; and death exhibited, only as a memorial;—a sacrifice, however, that is truly real; because Jesus Christ is really therein contained; and really, in it, under these symbols of his passion, offered up to his Eternal Father:—a sacrifice, still, of *commemoration*, which, so far from detaching us, as the Protestant pretends it does, from the sacrifice of the cross, does, on the contrary, by all this variety of circumstance, attach us even the more forcibly to it: because, not only is the former, in our belief, referred wholly to the latter, but it subsists solely by this relation; and from it derives the whole of its sacred efficacy.

Such is the express doctrine of the Catholic church, inculcated to the faithful by the council of Trent. *The sacrifice of the Mass*, says the holy synod, *was established, in order to represent that, which was once accomplished upon the cross; to perpetuate its memorial to the end of ages; and to apply to our souls its salutary virtues, for the remission of those sins, which we, every day, commit.* (Sess xxii.) Far, therefore, from believing, that the sacrifice of the cross was incomplete, the church, on the contrary, believes it to have been so perfect, and so fully satisfactory, that every subsequent institution of religion is but designed to commemorate it; and to apply its sanctifying influences to the souls of men.

In like manner, and for the reasons just assigned, the Catholic church professes, that the whole merit of our redemption is attached to the death of the Son of God. The Protestant might, indeed, easily understand, even from the few principles, which I have been explaining, that, when, in the celebration of our sacred mysteries, we say to God, "*We offer up to Thee this holy sacrifice*,"—we do not pretend, by such oblation, to offer up to him a fresh price, or another ransom, for our salvation. Our only intention is, to present to the Eternal Father the merits of his divine Son; and that infinite price, which, for the love of us, the beneficent Being once paid upon the cross.

Our dissenting brethren, the Protestants, do not conceive, that they give any kind of offence to their Redeemer, when they offer him up to God, as he is present to their faith. Therefore, if they believe, that he is present in reality, what objection can they seriously pretend to make, or what reasonable repugnance can they have, to the action of offering him up, when thus effectually present? It is consequently,—if men were only consistent, and candid,—it is to the article merely of the real presence, that the whole controversy between the Catholic, and the Protestant, upon the subject of the Eucharist, ought properly to be reduced.

If, indeed, the truths, which I have just laid down, were but wisely understood by the enemies of our religion, they would be sensible, how false are the notions; and how ill-founded, the opinions, which, hitherto, they have entertained, respecting the sacrifice of our altars. They would,—if thus wisely instructed,—own, that the Catholic does not, as they now accuse him of doing,—pretend to set up a new scheme of propitiation; in order, anew,—as if the sacrifice of the cross were insufficient,—to appease the divine displeasure; or else,—as if it were imperfect,—to add some supplement to the price of our redemption. Not one of these imputations would be considered,—did men judge only from our real doctrines,—as having any foundation whatsoever. For, according to our real doctrines, the whole, that

is done at our altars, and in our sacrifice, is done, as I have been explaining it, in the mere form of intercession; and by the way of application.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON THE OBJECTIONS MADE TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, DERIVED FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The explanation, which I have given in the preceding chapter, is sufficient, if it be seriously considered, to refute those objections, which are sometimes urged against us from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and to evince, at the same time, the emptiness of those accusations, which, upon the alleged authority of the same Epistle, reproach us with the crime of setting aside, and even annihilating, the sacrifice of the cross. But, since the best proof, which reason can suggest, that any two doctrines are not at variance with each other, is the evidence, that none of the propositions relating to the one, are repugnant to the propositions belonging to the other,—I shall, hence, proceed to explain, in a very cursory manner, the doctrine of Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

The intention, therefore, and the plan of the apostle in the above epistle, are to make us sensible, that the sinner could not escape death, except upon the express condition of

substituting some other person to undergo the awful sentence in his stead;—that, whilst men substituted, in room of themselves, the oblations only of slaughtered animals, their sacrifices, in such cases, were very little else than public declarations, that it was themselves, who deserved to die;—that, since so inadequate an exchange was insufficient to satisfy the severity of eternal justice, men, upon this account, were compelled to renew daily the sacrifices of fresh victims; (this latter circumstance is, no doubt, a plain attestation of the insufficiency of the legal substitutions)—but, that, since Christ Jesus has been mercifully pleased to lay down His life, in the room of sinners,—satisfied by the voluntary substitution of so great a victim, God does not now demand any thing from man, which ought, any way, to be considered as the price of his reconciliation. Such, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, are the principles of the apostle. From them, he concludes,—not only that, after Jesus Christ, no other victim ought to be immolated, but that even Jesus Christ himself ought only to be immolated once, under the bleeding forms of death.

Let the reader, therefore, who, loving his own salvation, is also the friend of truth,—let him recall to his remembrance the maxims, which I have laid down, respecting the manner, in which this beneficent Redeemer offers himself to his Eternal Father in our behalf, in the mystery of our altars. Not a single propo-

sition, I am fully convinced, will he discover amid those maxims, that would seem, I do not say, to contradict, but even to weaken, any one of the principles, which I have just cited from the apostle. So that the only objection, founded upon this Epistle, which, with any thing like plausibility, could be urged against us, must repose upon the silence of the sacred document. But, surely, the man, who reflects attentively upon the characters of the divine wisdom, in the dispensation of its secrets, throughout the different books of the sacred Scriptures,—surely, such man will not pretend to restrict our instruction, or information, respecting the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, to the mere Epistle to the Hebrews; particularly since the subject is even foreign, or at least, unnecessary, to this Epistle. For, the aim of the apostle in it, is to explain the perfection, simply, of the sacrifice of the cross; and not those various expedients, which the divine goodness has instituted, as the mediums of its application.

If, indeed, (I make this remark, in order to prevent all equivocation,) if the word, "*offer*," be understood, in this epistle, as implying the actual death of the victim,—then, I allow it to be true, that, in such case, Jesus Christ is neither offered up, any longer, in the Eucharist; nor even on any other occasion whatsoever. But, the fact is, that, in different parts of the sacred writings, the word "*offer*" has a much more extensive signification. Often

it is said, that we offer to God, whatever we present before him. And the church, which regulates its language, as well as its doctrine, not by the mere Epistle to the Hebrews, but by the entire body of the sacred Scriptures, does not hesitate to say, that Christ Jesus offers himself to God, whenever, presenting himself before his majesty, he appears there in behalf of men:—consequently, that he offers himself likewise, in the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. This is, indeed, an expression, that is general in the writings of the Fathers.

Neither can it, with any semblance of reason, be objected, that the manner, in which Jesus presents himself in the Eucharist to his Eternal Father, can possibly be any injury to the sacrifice of the cross. Such conclusion is repugnant to the whole tenor of the sacred Scriptures; and above all, to the Epistle, which is here made the source of objection to our doctrines. For, by a similar mode of reasoning, it would, in this case, be necessary to conclude, that when Christ Jesus, "*entering into the world*," (Heb. x. 5.) offered himself to God, in the room of those victims, "*which pleased him not*,"—he, consequently, did an injury also to that oblation, which, subsequently, he made upon the cross. It would be necessary even, in this case, to conclude, that, when "*he continues to appear before God in our behalf*,"—he lessens the value of that sacred offering, "*by which, once, he ap-*

peared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself;" (Heb. ix. 26.) and that, "*ceasing not to intercede for us,*" (vii. 25.) himself, equivalently, deems inadequate, and accuses of insufficiency, that pious intercession, which he made, at his death, "*with strong crying, and tears.*" (Heb. v. 7.)

Now, the truth is, that inferences such as these, are not only false; they are absolutely absurd. And the consequence therefore is, that, although Jesus Christ has offered himself once to be the humble victim to the justice of his Father,—still, he does not, for this reason, cease to offer himself *yet*, in behalf of his creatures. The infinite perfection of the sacrifice of the cross consists in this,—that whatsoever precedes, as well as whatsoever follows, it,—all relates, and should be referred, entirely to it;—that, just as what precedes it, is the preparation for it, just so, what follows it, is its consummation, and application;—that the payment, indeed, of our redemption is not now any more reiterated; but, that what applies this redemption, is perpetuated constantly;—in short, that it is necessary to know, how to make a distinction between those things, which are repeated, as imperfect; and those, which are continued, as necessary, and perfect.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FOREGOING DOCTRINE

I SHALL pause here, a moment, just to request our dissenting brethren to make a few serious reflections upon the maxims, which I have been suggesting to them, on the subject of the Eucharist.

The essential basis of our doctrine, respecting this adorable mystery, is the real presence. This, too, is the basis, which forms the chief foundation of our contests with many of the Protestant, but in particular with the Calvinistic, societies. The controversy is peculiarly important; since it relates to the presence of Jesus Christ himself. It is important;—because there is no mystery of religion, that appears more perplexing to the faith of our adversaries; nor any, upon which they are more completely at variance with us.

In most of the disputes, which we are unhappily obliged to maintain with our Protestant brethren, when the good sense of the latter permits, or induces, them to listen to us with moderation, they are always sure to find, that their difficulties are softened down; and that, hitherto, they have been much more offended, and hurt, at the sound of words, than at the reality of things. But, on the article of the Eucharist, the contrary is the fact. Upon this article, the Catholic, and the Protestant, most strikingly agree in their forms of

anguage;—the latter, exactly like the former, employing the terms "*real participation*," along with a great variety of expressions similar to this. However, when we proceed to explain the intrinsic properties of our respective tenets, the more we do so, the more we are found to differ. And the reason is, because the Protestant is not willing to admit all the consequences of those truths, which he professes to acknowledge;—disconcerted, and perhaps even shocked, as I have before remarked, at the difficulties, which his senses, and the pride of the human mind, affect, in such consequences, to have detected.

It is, therefore, unfortunately too true, that although the article of the Eucharist be perhaps the most important, it is also, at the same time, the most perplexing of all our religious controversies; and that wherein the Catholic, and the Protestant, are most decidedly at variance with each other.

It has, however, pleased the divine wisdom to permit, that one, and perhaps the largest portion of the Protestant community,—the Lutherans,—should still continue as firmly attached to the belief of the Real Presence, as is the Catholic church itself. Neither is this all: for, the same providence has permitted likewise, that even the Calvinistic sects should have decided, and formally declared, that the above doctrine of the Real Presence is completely inoffensive; or, to use their own expression, "*devoid of venom:*" that it does

not destroy the foundations, either of salvation, or of faith; and finally, that it ought not to cause any breach of communion between the members of the reformed societies.

Here, then, let the Protestant, who feels any serious interest for the security of his salvation, be all attention to the wonderful ways of Providence,—ways, which are doubtlessly designed to call back the wanderer to the paths of truth; and to reconduct him insensibly to the bosom of his parent church. As for all other subjects, which serve sometimes to excite the complaints of our Protestant brethren,—these, by the means of a little explanation, it would be easy, if not wholly to set aside,—at all events, to reduce them to little or no difficulty whatsoever. But, upon the subject of the Eucharist,—a subject, which could not thus easily be adjusted,—the Reformers themselves, very fortunately, have removed the most serious obstacle; having positively declared, that there is nothing in the doctrine of the Real Presence, that is either injurious to salvation, or repugnant to the fundamental principles of the true religion.

It is true, that the Lutherans, whilst they agree with us in the fundamental doctrine of the Real Presence, do not still, along with us, acknowledge all the consequences of this doctrine. They suppose, that the bread, and the body of Christ, are joined together. Some of them condemn the action of adoring the holy sacrament; and it is in its actual partici-

pation only, that they seem to acknowledge the real presence of their Redeemer. But, surely, it is not the subtilty of a few artful theologians, that ought to induce any reasonable individual to believe, that, where men admit, and defend, the Real Presence, they ought not likewise to admit its consequences: for, comparing objects together,—the former is more important, and even more difficult to be conceived, than the latter.

Neither is this the only thing, that the goodness of Providence has permitted. For, labouring by secret artifices to recall the Protestant once more to the fold, from which he has gone astray; and laying the foundations of peace, and reconciliation, even amid the bitterness of animosity, and the violences of contention,—the divine mercy has, still further, so ordained it, that the Calvinistic societies should, all of them, have acknowledged, and publicly attested,—that, on the supposition, that the words of the institution, *This is my body*, ought to be taken literally,—the Catholics, in this case, reason better far, and draw their conclusions, with much more consistency, than do their own Lutheran brethren.*

* *Both the language, and belief, of the Lutherans, respecting the real presence, are, in my opinion, more preposterous, than those of the Papists.* Calvin. (Admonit. Ult. ad Westphal.)

I assert, that the Papists, understanding as they do, the words, THIS IS MY BODY, *without any figure, believe that the divinity follows the body by concomitance, with much greater reason, than you Lutherans do, who, de-*

I shall not repeat,—neither is it necessary,—the various passages, which many authors have so often cited upon this subject. With the exception, indeed, of those individuals, whose minds are fast chained to prejudice, there are few men, so unenlightened, or so illiberal, as not to own, that, if once the Real Presence be admitted, then are the Catholic tenets, of all others, the most rational, and the most consistant.

It is, consequently, an established truth, that the Catholic doctrine concerning the holy Eucharist contains, and inculcates, nothing, *except the Real Presence*, PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD However, it is true, we do not stop here. We deduce inferences from the circumstance of the Real Presence. But, we request the Protestant to consider, that, neither in these inferences, nor in our explanations of the divine mystery, do we employ any other maxims, besides those, which are necessarily included in the fact of the Real Presence.

Should it, then, be asked, why the Lutherans, believing as they do, in the Real Presence, refuse, still, to admit our sacrifice,—which, according to us, is its obvious result,—our answer, compressed into one word, is this,—that our tenets respecting the eucharistic sacrifice

nying the words of concomitance, still retain the sense of it. Zuingilus. (De Cœnâ.)

The dogma of consubstantiation is farther removed from the words of Christ, than that of transubstantiation: whether we consider the letter, or the sense of those words. Ursunian. (Hist. Sacram.)

ought to be ranked amongst those other consequences of the Real Presence, which the Lutherans have not comprehended, and which we, in the opinion even of the Calvinists, have penetrated more rationally, than they have done.

But, if our Catholic explanations be sufficient to convince the Calvinist, that our doctrine concerning the eucharistic sacrifice is included virtually in that of the Real Presence,—he ought, in such case, to see moreover, and to ackowledge, that then, the grand dispute respecting the Mass,—a dispute, which has filled volumes, and given occasion to so much rancour,—should henceforth be abandoned; and expunged from the rolls of controversy. In fact, in this case the chief difficulty is done away: and, what is still more important,—this holy sacrifice, for which the Protestants entertain so decided an aversion, becomes the necessary consequence, and the natural explanation, of a doctrine, which, even by their own confession, "*is devoid of venom.*" Let the adversaries, therefore, of our divine religion look well into their own hearts: and placed piously in the presence of God, let them examine seriously, whether indeed they have all that reason, which they flatter themselves they have, for having abandoned those sacred altars, where their forefathers, for so many ages, used to feed on the Bread of Life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS.

ANOTHER consequence, which results from our doctrine concerning the Real Presence; and which, also, it would be wrong to pass over without notice, is the following;—that, since Christ is really present in this holy sacrament, it is not to the sensible elements, which clothe it, that grace and benediction are appended, but to the proper substance of His living, and life-giving, Flesh; because it is to this, that the Divinity is united. On this account, whoever believes in the mystery of the Real Presence, ought not to make any difficulty respecting the circumstances of receiving under one kind only;* because, under one

* John vi. 50, 51. *This is the Bread descending from heaven; that, if any man eateth thereof, he may not die....If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever...He, that eateth this Bread, shall live forever.* (V 58.)

Luke xxiv. 30, 31. *And it came to pass, whilst he sat at table with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened; and they knew him.*

Acts ii. 42. *And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles; and in the communication of the breaking of bread; and prayer.*

Acts xx. 7. *And, on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.*

1 Corinthians xi. 27. *Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread;* OR, *drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

"*Although,*" says Luther, "*it may be well to use both*

kind, he receives whatever is essential to the character of the sacrament. He receives wholly, and without any partition, Him, who alone, can replenish all the vast capaciousness of the human heart: and he receives Him, too, with a plentitude the more certain, as the separation of the body and the blood is not real; but, as I have observed before, mysterious.

Behold, therefore, the wise and strong foundation, upon which the church, in her interpretation of the precept of communion, has declared, that the faithful may reap every benefit of sanctification, which the sacrament administers, through the medium of one kind only. If her wisdom have thought proper to confine the laity solely to one kind, it was not by any means her design to do so, out of contempt, or from disregard, for the other. On the contrary, she did so, out of a principle of veneration;—in order to prevent those irreverences, which the confusion, and negligence,

kinds in the sacrament, yet has Christ commanded nothing on the subject, as necessary." (Ep. ad Bohem.)

"*They sin not,*" the pretended Reformer adds, "*who use but one kind; Christ having left this to the choice of each one.*" (Capt. Bab.)

"*They sin not,*" says Melancthon, "*who use either kind.*" (Hist. Sac.)

There are, in like manner, many of the most distinguished English theologians, who speak the same sort of language;—asserting, that Christ never ordained the use of communion, under both species: and that therefore its participation, under both species, is not essential. Such is the doctrine of Montague, Forbes, White, &c. &c.

of the public had too often created, above all, in these latter ages. But, she reserves to herself still, the power of re-establishing the use of communion under both of the species, whenever she conceives, that this form of discipline may be eventually beneficial to the peace, and unity, of the Christian public.

Our Catholic theologians have demonstrated to their Protestant antagonists, that themselves have very frequently made use of interpretations, in relation to the sacraments, very similar to the foregoing. The interpretation, in particular, is remarkable, which is contained in the twelfth chapter of their book of discipline, in the seventh article, under the title of the Lord's Supper. In this, they say:—*The* BREAD *of the Lord's Supper ought to be administered to those, who cannot drink wine; upon their making a protestation, that it is not done out of contempt: and on endeavouring to do the best, they can,—even applying the cup close to their mouths, in order to prevent all scandal.* The inference, which this regulation presents, is manifest. It is,—that these teachers of Protestantism did not, therefore, conceive, that, by the institution of Jesus Christ, the participation of both kinds is essential to the action of communion. For, if such were the case, then the sacrament ought to be absolutely withholden from all those, who cannot receive it entirely. It should not be administered, in a way, which is repugnant to that, which its divine Author had establish-

ed, and commanded. The inability of receiving it would, in such case, justify its omission.—But, the truth is:—These pretended Reformers felt, that the severity would be excessive, should they refuse to administer the sacrament, under one kind at least, to those, who were incapable of receiving it under both. And since their condescension upon this point is not founded upon any authority of the Scriptures, the consequence is,—that they are reduced to admit, with us, that the words, in which Christ Jesus proposes the two kinds to us, are subject to some sort of interpretation; and that it is even by the judgment of the church, that such interpretation ought necessarily to be conducted.

It may, however, possibly be immagined, that the point of discipline, which I have just been citing; and which was instituted by the synod of Poitiers, in the year 1560,—was reformed, and altered, by that of Verteuil, in the year 1567; wherein it was ordained, that, "*It is not the opinion of the society, that the bread ought to be administered to those, who will not receive the cup.*" But, not even, spite of this decision, are the two synods at variance with each other. That of Verteuil speaks of those only, "WHO WILL NOT receive the cup." That of Poitiers speaks of those, "WHO CANNOT." In reality, notwithstanding the decision of the synod of Verteuil, the article of Poitiers forms still a part of the Protestant code of discipline; and has even been

approved by another synod, posterior to that of Verteuil,—the synod of Rochelle, holden in 1571; when the article was revised; and confirmed in the form just cited.

But, had it even happened, that the Protestant synods had varied in their sentiments upon this question, the circumstance would tend merely to demonstrate this,—that the object is not a point of faith; but a point, which, according to their own principles, the church may, in its wisdom, either alter, or improve, precisely as occasions, and circumstances, may seem to dictate, or require.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON SCRIPTURE, AND TRADITION.

THE only articles, which, after the foregoing explanations, I have yet to discuss, are the opinions, which we entertain, respecting the word of God, and the authority of the church.

Christ Jesus laid the foundations, of his church upon the authority of preaching. And the consequence, therefore, is,—that the unwritten word was the first rule of Christianity,*—a rule, which, even when the books of

* Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. *Go you, therefore, and* TEACH *all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* TEACHING *them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.*

Mark xvi. 15. *Go into the whole world; and* PREACH *the Gospel to every creature.*

he New Testament were superadded to it, did not, upon this account, lose any share of its former authority. For this reason it is, that we receive, with an equal degree of veneration, whatsoever has been taught by the apostles; whether this were communicated by writing, or inculcated only by word of mouth,*—according to the express declaration

1 Corinthians xi. 23. *For, I have received of the Lord, that, which also I have* DELIVERED *to you.*

1 Corinthians xv. 3. *For,* I DELIVERED *to you, first of all, that, which I also received.*

* 2 Thessalonians iii. 6. *And we charge you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly; and not according to the* TRADITION, *which they have received from us.*

1 Corinthians xi. 2. *Now, I praise you, brethren, that. . .you keep my ordinances, as* I DELIVERED *them to you.*

2 Timothy i. 13. *Hold the form of sound words, which thou hast* HEARD *of me in faith.*

2 Timothy ii. 2. *The things which thou hast* HEARD *of me, before many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to* TEACH *others also.*

There is not, indeed, any where in the Scriptures, a syllable to be found, that would seem to intimate, that Christ ever commanded his disciples to compose a code of faith, much less a complete code, for the direction of his subjects:—not a word, to attest, that the writings of the apostles are a code of the above description:—not a line, to prove, in the eye at least of wisdom, that it is the privilege of each individual to interpret the sacred volumes; and to cull from them, as he judges right, the articles of his belief The obscurity alone of the holy Books is a plain demonstration, that they were neither designed by the divine wisdom to be an ordinary code of faith; nor to be subjected to the notions of private interpretation. Indeed, not even do they contain the whole depositum of the Christian faith. Bishop Montague, although a Protestant, declares, that "*there*

of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians, commanding them *to hold fast the traditions, which they had been taught, whether* BY WORD, *or by epistle.* (2 Thess. ii. 15.)

There cannot, indeed, exist a sign more indisputably certain, that any peculiar doctrine derives its origin, and has descended down to us, from the apostles, than when it has been embraced by all the churches of the Christian world, without the possibility of pointing out any fixed period of its introduction. We cannot help receiving whatever is established in this manner. We do it even, with that willing submission which is due, we feel, to the divine authority. Indeed, I am convinced, that the Protestants themselves, where their reason is not warped, and rendered obstinate, by prejudice, entertain, at the bottom of their hearts, the very same opinion. For, it is impossible to imagine, that any tenet, which has been admitted, since the dawn itself of Christianity, could really have derived its origin from any other source, save that of the apostles. Hence, the Protestant ought not to be astonished, that the Catholic,—careful to collect, and retain, whatever his forefathers have

are six hundred particulars, instituted by God in the point of religion, commanded and used by the church, of which, we own, that the Scripture delivers, or teaches, no such thing." (Orig.) At all events, it is certain, that the Protestant believes, and cultivates, several things,—for example, the institution of the Sunday, infant baptism, &c —for which he has no authority in the texts of the sacred volumes.

bequeathed unto him,—preserves with veneration the holy depositum of tradition; just as he piously reserves the sacred treasure of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE church has been established by the power, and wisdom, of its sacred Author, in order to be the guide of Christian faith; the director of Christian piety; the guardian of the Scriptures, and the preserver of tradition.* We, therefore, receive from her hands those

* Matthew xxviii. 18, 19. *All power is given to me, in heaven, and on earth. Go you, therefore; and teach all nations.*

Matthew xviii. 17. *And if he will not hear them, tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee, as the heathen, and the publican.*

Mark xvi. 15. *Go into the whole world; and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

Luke x. 16. *He, that heareth you, heareth me; and he, that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he, that despiseth me, despiseth him, that sent me.*

Romans x. 17, 18. *Faith, then, cometh by hearing; and hearing, by the word of Christ. But, I say; have they not heard? Yea, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth; and their words unto the ends of the whole world.*

1 Corinthians xii. 28, 29. *And God indeed hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly teachers... Are all apostles? Are all prophets? are all teachers?*

1 John iv. 6. *He, that knoweth God, heareth us. He, that is not of God, heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

holy writings, which we reverence, as canonical. I am even convinced,—spite of the contrary assertion,—that it is her authority principally, that induces the Protestant himself to receive, as inspired, several portions of the holy volumes. It is hence, that he admits as divine, the Canticle of Canticles, or Song of Solomon, which, in fact, possesses hardly any intrinsic marks of inspiration;—hence, that he reveres the Epistle of Saint James, which Luther rejects, as spurious;—hence, that he respects the epistle of Saint Jude, whose authority, on account of certain apocryphal books, which are quoted in it, might, to many, appear suspicious. But, in short, it is not; it cannot be, upon any other authority, in reality, that the Protestant receives, as inspired, the whole body of the sacred Scriptures. For, it is his custom to reverence these, even before their perusal has convinced him, that the spirit of God is infused into them.

Attached, therefore, as we inseparably are, to the holy authority of the church, by the means of the scriptures, which we receive from her hands,—we from her, learn likewise the doctrines of tradition; and by means of tradition, the genuine sense of the sacred pages It is for this reason, that the church professes to teach nothing, as from herself; nor to invent any new article of belief. What alone she does, is, under the influence, and direction, of the Holy Ghost, simply to declare the di-

vine revelation; and, after having declared, to follow it.

And that the Holy Ghost does really explain himself by the mouth of the church,—of this, we have a positive evidence, on the occasion of the dispute, which, in the time of the apostles, took place, respecting the ceremonies of the Law. The acts of these founders of our holy institute, in the decision of this important controversy, form a record, which instructs all succeeding ages, where that authority resides, by which all religious differences ought always to be determined. So that whenever any dispute shall unhappily occur to divide the faithful, the church, upon such occasion, will always interfere with her authority: and her pastors, convened in council, will always, in imitation of the apostles, say, —"*It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.*" (Acts xv.) When she has spoken in this manner, then shall her chrildren be instructed, and made to understand, that now, it is no longer theirs to examine anew the articles, which have been thus decided; but, in humble acquiescence, to submit to her decrees. This is merely imitating the examples of St. Paul and Silas; who, when they carried to the faithful the first ordinance of the apostles, so far from allowing them any fresh discussion of the point, which had been just decided,—they, on the contrary, *went through the provinces, teaching all to observe the injuctions of the apostles.* (Acts xvi.)

Thus it is, that the true children of God, with humble acquiescence, submit their judgments to the wiser judgment of the church; convinced, that, by her mouth, they hear delivered to them the oracles of the Holy Ghost. It is in consequence of this conviction, that, after having said in the Creed, *I believe in the Holy Ghost*, we immediately add, *And in the holy Catholic church;*—tying ourselves, by these words, to acknowledge, that the depositum of truth is, in this universal church, preserved for ever,—unfailing, perpetual, and entire. In fact, this church, which we reverence, as perpetual, would cease to he a church, did she once cease to teach the genuine truths of revelation. So that the individuals, who think, or are apprehensive, that she will abuse her authority for the purpose of propagating error, do not in reality possess that faith, which they ought to do, in that divine Spirit, by whom the sacred institution is directed.

And let the Protestant consider objects, in a merely human point of view:—he will, even in this case, be reduced to acknowledge, that the Catholic church, so far from endeavouring,—as her adversaries often assert, she does,—to tyrannise over the belief of her members, she, on the contrary, has employed every possible expedient to bind herself; and to deprive herself of the means of introducing innovations. For these ends, not only does she submit to the sacred Scriptures; but, in order to stay, or for ever banish, any arbitrary in-

terpretations,—which cause sometimes the thoughts of men to pass for Scripture,—she ties herself, moreover, to interpret, and understand, whatsoever belongs to faith and morals, according to the interpretation, and sense, of the holy Fathers. She solemnly professes, that, from the interpretations of these enlightened personages, she will, on no occasion, deviate. She declares, in all her councils, as well as in all her professions, and instruments, of faith, that she does not receive any article of belief, which is not exactly conformable to the tradition of each, and of every preceding, century.

Men may reason as they please:—but, it is true, that, if the Protestant would only consult the dictates of his own conscience, he would find, that, after all, the word, "*Church*," possesses a much greater influence over him, than, in his disputes with us, he is willing to admit. I do not, for my own part, believe, that, in the whole Protestant community, there is a single individual, who,—if he be possessed of good sense,—would not tremble at the prospect of seeing himself stand alone in the profession of any peculiar opinion; although even such opinion might, to him, appear well founded. So true it is, that, on a subject so vitally important as that of religion, men,—to be contentedly confident in their own sentiments, —require the sanction moreover of some society, or other, which thinks, and believes, as they do. It is upon this account, that the

Being, who created us, and who knows, what best suits our circumstances, has, for our greater benefit, and happiness, decreed, that each individual amongst the faithful shall be subject to the authority of the church;—an authority, which, for this reason, is, of all others, the most forcibly established. In reality, the authority of the church is established, not only by the testimony, which God himself has furnished in its favour in the sacred Scriptures; but, by a great variety of sensible attestations also, which point out in the most striking manner,—that, with a tender providence, He still watches over the holy institution. The proofs of this may be distinctly traced, not less in its inviolable, and perennial, duration, than in its wonderful, and miraculous, propagation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE PROTESTANT OPINIONS RESPECTING THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

So necessary is the supreme authority of the church for the regulation of those disputes, and differences, which take place among the faithful, either concerning articles of faith, or respecting the sense of the holy Scriptures, that the Protestants themselves, although they had reviled the thing as a piece of tyranny,—have yet, after all, been reduced to call it back; and to re-establish it, in their own communities.

When the Independents proclaimed publicly, that it is the right of each, and every, individual to follow the dictates of his own conscience, without submitting his judgment to any society of men, or to any ecclesiastical tribunal,—when they did this; and upon this principle, moreover, refused to obey the mandates of the synods,—the synod of Charenton, in the year 1644, condemned loudly the daring doctrine; and condemned it, too, for the very same reasons, and on account of those very inconveniences, for which we Catholics condemn it likewise. In the first place, the ministers of the above synod remark, that the error of the Independents consists, in teaching,—that, "*Each particular church should govern itself by its own laws; without any dependence upon any individual in ecclesiastical concerns; and without any obligation of acknowledging the authority, either of consistories, or synods, for its regulation, or its conduct.*"—In the next place, the same synod decides,—that the above sect "*is prejudicial to the state, just equally as it is to the church; that it opens a door to every kind of irregularity, and extravagance; that it destroys every means of remedying these disorders; and that if it were once established, there might be formed as many religions, as there are parishes; or even, as there are private assemblages.*" These last words make it manifest, that it was principally in matters of faith, that the synod wished to establish a

system of *dependence*. For, the main inconvenience, it observes, into which the faithful would fall, by the illusions of independence, is,—that, seduced by them, "*they might form as many religions, as there are parishes.*"

According to the doctrine, therefore, of this Protestant synod, it is necessary, that each private church, and still more, of course, each private individual,—should depend, in all matters of faith, upon some supreme authority; an authority, residing, either in some assembly, or in some society; and to which all the faithful are bound to submit their judgment. For, it is a fact, that not even do the Independents themselves refuse to yield obedience to the word of God, in that sense, which their own judgment has affixed unto it. Neither do they reject the decisions of synods, *provided* that, after having examined them, they conceive, they have found them reasonable. What alone they refuse to do, is this:—They refuse to submit their judgment to the judgment of any assembly whatsoever. And the reason is,—because it is the leading principle of Protestantism, that every assembly, even that of the universal church, is a society of men, liable to error; and to which therefore, the Christian ought not to subject, or submit, his judgment:—the tribute of such submission being due to infinite wisdom only.

It is this pretended privilege of the Independents, that forms the great source of all those inconveniences, which the synod of

Charenton has pointed out so correctly. For, be the professions of men what they may; and although even they may profess to submit to the word of God,—yet, if each individual have the privilege to interpret it, according to his own ideas, and contrary to the sentiments, and final determination, of the church,—in such case, there can be no doubt, but that the illusive pretext "*opens a door to every kind of irregularity, and extravagance; destroys every means of remedying these disorders;*" (for, the decisions of the church are no remedy to men, who do not conceive themselves under any obligation of submitting to them)—and in short, "*gives occasion to the formation of as many religions, not only as there are parishes,*" but even as there are individuals.

It was for the purpose of avoiding the above inconveniences,—which are pregnant, in fact, with the ruin of Christianity,—that the synod of Charenton was compelled to institute a system "*of dependence in ecclesiastical concerns;*" and not only indeed in these, but even in matters of faith. However, spite of these precautions, the misfortune is,—that never will this Protestant system of subordination prevent those pernicious effects, which, professedly, it has been created to obviate. In order to do this, the only expedient would be, to establish, along with the Catholic, the rational maxim, that each private church, and still more, each private individual, ought to consider themselves obliged to submit their

judgment, in all matters of religion, to the judgment and authority of the church.

In the fifth chapter, on the subject of discipline, (Tit. Consist. Art. 31.) our pretended Reformers, affecting to prescribe "*the means of putting an end to those debates, which might arise respecting any point of doctrine, or of discipline, &c.*"--ordain, in the first place, that the consistory shall endeavour "*to appease the whole, without any noise; and with all the mildness of the word of God.*" After the establishment of a consistory; of a conference: and a provincial synod,—institutions, which they consider, as so many different degrees of jurisdiction,—after these, comes next the national synod,—an authority, which they regard as paramount to every other. Of this, they speak, in the following manner:—"*In the national synod, there shall be formed the entire, and final, resolution by the word of God; to which, should any refuse to submit, in every particular, and with an express disavowal of their errors, they shall be cut off from the society of the church.*" It is, thus, evident, that these imaginary Reformers do not attribute the authority of this ultimate determination to the word of God, considered abstractedly by itself, and independently of the interpretation of the church: because, although this "*word*" had been employed, on the occasions of their former decisions, in their inferior assemblies,—yet, from these, we remark, they allow the privilege of an appeal It is,

consequently, this "*word*," according as has been interpreted by the supreme tribunal of the church, that constitutes "*that final, and irrevocable, resolution, in which whoever refuses to acquiesce, in every particular*,"—although even he may conceive himself ever so well authorised by the word of God,—is, nevertheless, reprobated as profane; corrupting that Word, which he pretends to reverence; and insolently abusing it.

There is, however, in the form of the Letters of Deputation,—which were drawn up by the synod of Vitre, in 1617, in order to be observed by the provinces, on the occasions of their sending any member to the national synod,—there is, in the form of these letters, something, that is even much more forcible, and expressive, than what I have just cited from the acts of the synod of Charenton. The following is the extraordinary instrument:—*We promise before God to submit to whatsoever shall be concluded, and resolved upon, in your holy assembly; to obey all its mandates; and to execute them with all our power; persuaded, as we are, that God will preside over it; and conduct you by his Holy Spirit in all truth and equity, by the rule of his word.* Here, the question is, not whether the individuals shall receive the determination of the synod, *after* they have made the discovery, that it has spoken according to the sense of the holy Scriptures;—the question is, of submitting to such determination, even *before* the

assembly has been actually called together! And they do this, because "*they are persuaded*,"—they solemnly declare,—"*that the Holy Ghost will preside over it.*"—Now, if this conviction be founded upon a merely human presumption, can any individual, possibly, in his conscience, "*promise before God to submit to whatsoever shall be concluded, and resolved upon? to obey all the mandates of such assembly? and with all his power, to execute them?*" Or else, if this conviction be founded upon the complete certainty, that the Holy Ghost does really impart his assistance to the church, on the occasions of its final determinations,—then, I will remark, that not even do the Catholics themselves require any thing more than this.

Hence, the conduct itself of the Protestants demonstrates this,—that, upon the subject of supreme authority, these enemies of our holy religion agree, in reality, with us. They agree, that, without such authority, it is impossible to remove doubts; or to put an end to controversies, in religion. And if, on the unhappy occasion of their rebellion, they denied, that the faithful are bound to submit their judgments to the judgment of the church,—still, the necessity of calling back something, that looked like order, compelled them, ere long, to establish, what their first engagements, and the early darings of their presumption, had prompted them to reject.

But, in the national synod of St. Foi, they proceeded even to still greater lengths, than any which I have hitherto stated. An overture, it would seem, had been made towards a reconciliation with the Lutherans, by means of "*A formulary of profession of general faith, common to all the churches,*" which it was proposed, at this time, to draw up. In France, the Protestant churches were solicited to send to an assembly, convoked for this purpose, "*certain respectable individuals, approved of, and authorised, by all the said churches; and invested with ample powers* TO DISCUSS, TO AGREE UPON, AND TO DECIDE, EVERY POINT OF DOCTRINE, *and whatever else relates to union.*" Upon the suggestion of this singular proposal, behold the terms, in which the resolution of the synod of St. Foi was expressed: "*The national synod of this kingdom, after having thanked God for such an overture; and praised the care, the diligence, and the wisdom, of the aforesaid deputies; and approving the remedies, which they have suggested,* (that is, the plan of drawing up a new Confession of Faith; and of commissioning certain individuals to do so) ——ORDAINS, *that, should the copy of the aforesaid Confession of Faith chance to be sent in time, it shall, in this case, be examined by each separate provincial synod; or else, according to the convenience of each province. Nevertheless, the synod has deputed four of its ministers, the most experienced in such*

transactions, to whom express orders have been delivered to repair to the place appointed, by the day agreed upon; holding letters, and full powers, from all the ministers and ancient deputies of the provinces of this kingdom, as well as from his lordship, the Viscount Turenne, in order to attain the objects expressed above. And should it even happen, THAT THERE BE NOT ANY MEANS OF EXAMINING, THROUGHOUT ALL THE PROVINCES, THE AFORESAID CONFESSION, THEN SHALL IT BE LEFT TO THEIR PRUDENCE, AND SOLID JUDGMENT, TO COME TO A CONCLUSION UPON ALL THE POINTS, *which shall have been the subjects of deliberation; whether those points relate* TO DOCTRINE, *or to any thing else, that concerns the good, the union, and the tranquillity, of all the churches.*"—Such are the effects of Protestant liberty, and of Protestant consistency! How often do the enemies of our religion upbraid us with the weakness of giving up our opinions to the judgment of the church!—which is nothing else, they insultingly add, but a society of men, who are liable to be deceived. And, behold! when themselves are assembled in their national synod, representing nearly all the churches of France, they boldly venture to compromise, and endanger, their own faith, by confiding it to the disposal, or judgment, *of four individuals!*—and even with so complete an abandonment, at the same time, of their own private opinions, as to give to these four individuals the full power to

alter that very Confession of Faith, which they now publish to the whole Christian world, as a confession, that contains the pure word of God;—a confession, for which, on the occasions, when they presented it to their sovereigns, they said, "an infinite multitude of their members were prepared to lay down their lives!"* But, I shall leave it to the wisdom

* Error is always incoherent: and I could easily cite instances of inconsistency in the established religion of this country, which, if not exactly similar, are at least equal, to those, with which Bossuet reproaches the French Calvinistic churches. However, I need not appeal to such examples. For, is it not a fact, that the whole constitution of the established religion,—its basis, and its buttresses; its fences, and its securities, are, all of them nearly, made up of very little else than inconsistencies? Thus, for example,—the established church, in conformity with the principles of the Reformation, disclaiming all pretensions to infallibility, allows, that, just like individuals, itself is liable to error. "*Though we believe*," says Dr. Marsh, "*that we are right, we admit, we are possibly* WRONG: *though we believe others are wrong, we admit, that they are possibly* RIGHT." Accordingly, in consonance, still farther, with these maxims, it proclaims moreover the emancipation from the control of authority; the sacred rights of private judgment; and the freedom of belief. All this is genuine Protestantism;—which whoever denies, is not a real Protestant. But, now, mark the inconsistencies. For, what, notwithstanding all the above concessions, is, still, the conduct of the establishment? It is completely the violation, both of Protestant principles, and of its own professions. So far is the church of England from acting like an institution, which owns itself liable to errors,—that, on the contrary, it confidently assumes to itself all the privileges of infallibility: and so far from conceding in reality, that liberty, which it approves in words, it even punishes the men, who use it. It dictates, and prescribes, creeds, and confessions, and articles of faith. It issues laws, and canons, and regulations, the most restrictive and severe

of the enlightened reader to make his own reflections upon the singular decree of this Protestant synod. I shall hasten to complete my explanation of our own tenets.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY SEE; AND ON THAT OF THE EPISCOPACY.

It was the will of the Son of God, that his church should be ONE; and established solidly upon the firm basis of *unity*.* For these rea-

It exacts from its members, oaths, and subscriptions, and solemn declarations. It imposes tests, and pains, and penalties; and, to complete the climax, it excommunicates, and declares "*accursed*," the disbelievers of its doctrines. Now, what is inconsistency, if this be not? Or what,—if this be not,—is the arrogation of the claims of inerrancy? The dissenters complain, daily, of these awful circumstances. And they complain, with reason. For, if,—as Dr. Marsh expresses it,—if the doctrines of the establishment "*may be* WRONG," is it not improper to oblige men to believe,—even *to swear*, that they believe, them? And if the doctrines of others "*may be* RIGHT," is it not unjust to excommunicate them, for believing them? "If indeed,"—say the dissenters, "the conduct of the establishment be well founded, then should the whole host of Protestantism hasten back, at once, to the pale of popery."

* John x. 16. *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

Romans xvi. 17. *Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them, who cause dissensions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine, which you have learned; and to avoid them.*

Ephesians iv. 3, 4, 5. *Careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, and one spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith; one baptism.*

sons, and in order to maintain, and cement this unity, his wisdom thought proper to institute the supremacy of Saint Peter.* We, therefore, acknowledge this same supremacy, continued, and perpetuated, in the successors of this prince of the apostles;—paying to them, upon this account, that submission, and obedience, which, both the holy councils, and the holy fathers, have always inculcated, as the obligations of the Christian faithful.

Philippians iii. 15, 16. *Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded. Nevertheless, whereunto we are already arrived, that we be of the same mind; let us also continue in the same rule.*

* Matthew xvi. 15, &c. *Jesus saith unto them: But, whom do you say, that I am? Simon Peter answered, and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood have not revealed this to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say unto thee: Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*

John xxi. 15, &c. *So, when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me, more than these? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him, a third time: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said to him, a third time, Lovest thou me? And said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep.*

It is not necessary, that I should, here, say any thing concerning certain questions, which are sometimes agitated in our schools, although the Protestants are for ever citing these, in order to render the papal supremacy odious. These questions are not included among the articles of our faith. What alone is essential here, is simply to acknowledge a Head, established by the wisdom of Jesus, in order to conduct his flock in the paths of truth, and piety. Indeed, this is a maxim, which all those will willingly admit, who are the lovers of fraternal concord, or the friends of ecclesiastical unanimity.*

* "*It is out of love to the Reformation,*" says Bishop Thorndyke, "*that I insist on such a principle, as may serve to reunite us with the church of Rome; being well assured, that we can never be united with ourselves otherwise; and that not only the Reformation, but our common Christianity will be lost in the divisions, which will never end otherwise.*" (On Forbearance.)

"*Whoever knows Grotius,*" says this great man, "*knows, that it has always been his wish to see the Christian world once more reunited in one, and the same, body. He once imagined, that this might be begun, at least, by the union of the Protestants with one another. But, soon he found, that this is a thing quite impossible; not merely on account of the turbulent dispositions of the Calvinists, but because the Protestants have no common band of unity. For these reasons, not only will the differences among the Protestants never be composed; but fresh divisions will arise incessantly. Wherefore, it is now the decided opinion of Grotius, as well as of many others, that the Protestants will never be united amongst themselves, unless they be again reunited to the see of Rome. He, therefore, wishes, that the rupture should be healed; as well as its causes be removed. Among these, the supremacy of the Pope ought not to be reckoned. For, Melancthon himself allows, that this supremacy is essential to the maintenance of unity.*" (Ad Rivet.)

Had the authors of Protestantism been the friends of unity, they, surely, would not,—as many of them have done,—have abolished the episcopal government,—an institution, formed by Christ Jesus himself; and which has flourished, incontestably, from the era of the apostles. Neither would they, if they had loved peace and unanimity, have contemned the authority of the chair of Saint Peter; whose foundation is so clearly proved by the testimony of the sacred Scriptures; and whose duration is so evident by the attestation of tradition. They would rather,—if, happily, they had loved peace,—have preserved, with pious care, both the authority of the episcopacy, and the supremacy of the see of St. Peter. For, whilst the former maintains peace in the separate churches; the latter, by being a common centre, maintains it in the Catholic universe.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

Such, therefore, is the exposition of our Catholic doctrines. In my endeavour to explain them, I have confined myself to our leading tenets; omitting a few of those questions, which the Protestants themselves do not consider sufficiently important to form a reasonable motive for abandoning our communion. I flatter myself, that, should any of our dissenting brethren be induced to examine this

little Treatise, with calmness, and impartiality, they will be disposed, after they have done so, to think much more favourably of the proofs, upon which the faith in our holy religion is established, and reposes. They will even, I am convinced, be engaged to own, that our disputes might, in general, be terminated very easily, by the mere candid exposition of our sentiments. They will acknowledge, that our doctrines are holy; and that, even according to their own principles, there is not any one of our tenets, that is subversive of the foundations of salvation.

Or should it chance, that any one undertakes to publish a reply to this Treatise,—let me, in this case, remind him, that, in order to do so with any reasonable prospect of success, his plan ought not to be, to attempt the refutation of the doctrines, which I have stated in it. The reason is,—because my design has been very little more than just to propose our sentiments; without entering into the arguments, which prove them to be divine. It is true, I have here and there suggested a passing testimony: but, it was merely because the knowledge of the leading evidences of certain tenets forms an essential part of their exposition.

I should have deviated, likewise, from the plan of this instruction, had I stopped, in its progress, to examine the various methods, which some of our Catholic theologians have made use of, either to establish, or to elucidate,

the doctrine of the council of Trent; along with the different consequences, deduced by some writers from it. The method which the Protestant ought, properly, to pursue, who proposes to make any solid objections against this Treatise, is to prove, on the authority of acts, which the church is compelled to own, that I have not exposed our doctrine, with fidelity; —or else, to show, that my explanation of them leaves all the objections of our adversaries still unanswered; and all their disputes unsettled. In short, his plan should be, to point out directly, and precisely, what that unholy tenet of our religion is, (if there be such)— which destroys the foundations of Christian faith.

APPENDIX.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BOSSUET WITH MONS. CLAUDE.

[Extract from Mr. Butler's Life of Bossuet.]

THE account which Bossuet has given of this conference is extremely interesting. It turned on some points of the most important of all the articles in dispute between Roman Catholics, and Protestants,—the authority, by which Jesus Christ directed Christians to be governed, in the disputes, which, he foresaw, would arise on his doctrine. All Roman Catholics, and all the Protestants of the old school assert, that these disputes should be decided by the church. But, when churches themselves are divided, the question must be, which of them is to be obeyed. The Roman Catholic says, it is that church, which existed before all other churches, and from which all churches, not in union with her, have separated. This description, they assert, applies to the Roman Catholic church, and to no other. She therefore, in their opinion, is the mistress and judge, of controversies. Her authority, the separatists from her deny. And the dispute on this point is the most important of all their differences; as the decision of it involves the decision of every other article in dispute between them.

M. Claude, the antagonist of Bossuet in this conference, enjoyed the highest reputation in his party. Bossuet speaks of his learning, polite manners, and mildness, in high terms of praise. He mentions, that, throughout the conference, M. Claude listened with patience; expressed himself with clearness and force; pressed his own objections with precision; and never eluded an objection made to him, which admitted of an answer.

The conference was held, at the request of Mademoiselle de Duras, a niece of the great Turenne. Several Huguenots of distinction assisted at it; the Countess de Lorges, a sister of Mademoiselle de Duras, was the only Roman Catholic present.

On the day preceding the conference, Bossuet, by the desire of Mademoiselle de Duras, waited on her, and explained to her, what he understood by the words, "Catholic church," which he foresaw, would frequently occur in the conference. He explained to her, that, in his controversy with M. Claude, he should not appropriate these words to the Roman Catholic church, but use them to denote generally, what both M. Claude and he admitted,—an external and visible society, which professed to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to govern itself by his word. That, to found this society, the Son of God issued from his eternal Father; that, while he was on earth, he gathered round him certain men, who acknowledged him for their master; that, in subse-

quent times, the faithful aggregated themselves to that society, and formed, what is called in the Apostles' Creed, the Catholic, or Universal, church:—That, sometimes surrounded by infidels, sometimes torn into pieces by heretics there had not, from the first moment of her divine origination, been one instant of time, in which she had not possessed the faith, the doctrine, and the sacraments, of Christ; or in which, she had not been protected by him, or had not been visible, as the meridian sun, to all on earth: had there been but a single instant, in which, she ceased to profess the faith or possess the sacraments of Christ, it would necessarily follow that, the promises of Christ, to teach her all truth, to be with her to the end of the world, and to prevent the powers of hell from prevailing against her, would have failed. That there is such a church, M. Claude admits. But it cannot, says Bossuet, be the church of M. Claude.—"The reformed church, to justify her separation from the Roman Catholic church, must either charge the Son of God with a breach of his promise; or show the other great and visible church, in which the true faith has been uninterruptedly preserved. To assert the former, would be blasphemy; to assert the latter, would be to deny historical evidence. When the church of the Reformers first separated from the one, the holy, the Roman Catholic church, their church, by their own confession, did not enter into communion

with a single Christian church in the whole world."

On the day after this conversation took place, Mademoiselle de Duras called on Bossuet, in company with M. de Coton, a Huguenot minister of distinction, personally known to Bossuet, and esteemed by him. By her desire, Bossuet repeated to him, what he had mentioned to her, on the preceding day. M. Coton objected to Bossuet, the promises of God to the Jews, and the frequent revolts of the general body, both of the people of Israel, and the people of Judah, from the true worship: and concluded from it, that there might be a temporary interruption of the church of God, without a breach of the divine promise. To this, Bossuet replied, that it was evident from Scripture, that, though a great, or even the greater, part of the chosen people had apostatised, still the true worship of God never was extinguished, never ceased to be gloriously discernible either in Israel, or Judah;—that, in the times of their greatest apostasies, the true worship was retained by a great portion of the people of each kingdom; and that each of them had a regular succession of prophets; so that the inspired writers (Paral. xxxvi. 5. Jo. xi. 7. xxv. 1. 4.) scrupled not to say, that, every morning and night, the Almighty Word arose, and warned the chosen seed, by the mouths of his prophets, against the surrounding idolatry. "These prophets," continued Bossuet, "were themselves a part

of the people of God; they kept the people to their duty; and preserved a large part of them from corruption: and thus, though a frightful portion of them, and perhaps even the mass of them, fell into idolatry, there were always among them, those, who preserved pure, and visible to all, the deposit of the true worship." "To them," Bossuet said, "Ezechiel (xliv. 13.) alluded, when he mentioned the Priests and Levites, who, when the children of Israel went astray, always observed the ceremonies of the sanctuary; served the Lord, and appeared before him, to offer him victims."

Here, the conversation with M. Coton finished.—While they waited the arrival of M. Claude, to open the conference, Bossuet took occasion to mention to Mademoiselle de Duras, that, in the course of the proposed conference, he would prove to her satisfaction, three things;—the first, that the Huguenots acted, as if they believed, that the authority of their church was infallible; the second, that, though they acted in this manner, it was a maxim among them, that every individual, however ignorant, was obliged to believe, he understood the Scriptures better than all the rest of the church.—This seemed to surprise her much. He proceeded to mention to her the third, which she thought was still more strange;—that it was an article of the Huguenot creed, that there was a period of time, during which, a Christian was obliged to doubt, whether the Scripture were inspired by God; whether the

Gospel were a truth, or a fable; and whether Jesus Christ were an impostor, or the teacher of salvation. He undertook to force M. Claude to confess all this; or to convince her, that all of it was an evident, and direct consequence of his principles.

After this, they were informed that M. Claude was come; and the conference began. We can only pretend to present the reader with a short outline of it: but we can confidently assure him, that, if he takes an interest in such polemic discussions, he will be abundantly gratified by perusing the whole of the account given of it by Bossuet. M. Claude's account of it has not fallen into the hands of the writer.

Bossuet began the conference, by asking, 'if it were not among the Articles of the Reformed Church of France, that disputes on faith should be determined, if possible, by the consistory; that, if they were not determined by the consistory, they should be determined by the provincial synod; that, if they were not determined by the provincial synod, they should be determined by the holy national assembly; and that those, who refused to acquiesce in the determination of the national assembly, were to be declared out of the pale of the church, and excommunicated." He further asked, "if the circular letter of the reformed churches, when they sent their deputies to the national assembly, were not expressed in the following words: We promise, before God, to submit to all that shall be resolved

in your holy assembly; convinced, as we are, that God will preside over it, and guide you by his Holy Spirit, into all truth and equity, by the rule of his word." Bossuet concluded by observing, that by this, the reformed church *appeared* to act as if they acknowledged the infallibility of the national assembly.—This was the first of the three points, which he had undertaken to Mademoiselle de Duras, to bring M. Claude to confess.

The facts, mentioned by Bossuet, were candidly admitted by M. Claude: but he denied the conclusion, which Bossuet drew from them: and, in a speech of some length, which Bossuet praises for its neatness, and method, explained the nature of the arrangements, mentioned by Bossuet. He said, that the different assemblies, mentioned by Bossuet, had different degrees of jurisdiction; but that, in all of them, it was a jurisdiction of discipline; and that the intrinsic value of the truth of their decisions, and even of the decision of the national assembly, depended solely on their conformity to the word of God: and thus, according to M. Claude, an ultimate power of enforcing discipline, but no infallibility in doctrine, was vested by them in the national assembly. A discussion then took place, between Bossuet and M. Claude, to bring this to issue, and every word of it is highly interesting. At the end of it, Bossuet observed to M. Claude, that, if he understood him rightly, both the intermediate submission, required to the consistory, and pro-

vincial synod; and the ultimate submission, required to the national assembly, were conditional; or, in other words, that a conscientious submission could only be required, if the party thought their determinations were conformable to the word of God.—To this, M. Claude assented: "Then," said Bossuet, "the profession of submission might be equivalently couched, in these words;—I swear to submit to what you shall decide, if I shall think your decision is conformable to the word of God.—What does this really amount to?" A short silence ensued. Bossuet renewed the conference, by saying,—"You believe, that an individual may call in question the sentence of your church, even when your church pronounces in the last resort." "No, Sir," answered M. Claude, "it should not be said, that an individual can lawfully doubt in such a case, as there is every appearance that the judgment of the church will be right." "To say that there is an *appearance*," Bossuet replied, "is to say that there is a doubt." "But," answered M. Claude, "there is more than an appearance. Jesus Christ has himself promised, that those, who truly seek him, shall find him. Now, it should be *presumed*, in favour of the assemblies, that they seek him truly; and will, therefore, be certain of finding him. To be sure, if it should appear that there are cabals, or any other suspicious circumstance, in the national synod, the confidence in it might be lessened, or absolutely withdrawn" "Then, let us leave

these factions and cabals," said Bossuet, "out of the question. Let us suppose, that there is no faction, no cabal, nothing improper; and that every thing passes in perfect order: must its decision be received without examination?" M. Claude admitted that the right of examination existed. "Then," said Bossuet, "you admit, that every individual, whoever he be, may believe, and even ought to believe, that it may happen to him to understand the word of God better than the national assembly; and even better than a council assembled from the four quarters of the world. For, on what can this right, or duty, of examination be founded, but because the individual may justly conceive, that he himself understands the word of God better than those, whose decision he has a right to examine?"

This was the second point, which Bossuet had promised Mademoiselle de Duras to make M. Claude admit.

Bossuet now considered, that he had set M. Claude between the horns of a perfect dilemma. If M. Claude contended for the duty of submission to the sentence of the national assembly, under pain of excommunication, Bossuet opposed to him his acknowledgment of the right of individuals to try the propriety of that sentence by their private judgments;—if M. Claude admitted this right of private judgment in an individual, Bossuet opposed to him the assembly's right to excommunicate him for exercising it. Contending for the former, M

Claude admitted the first;—contending for the latter, M. Claude admitted the second of the positions, which Bossuet had promised Mademoiselle de Duras to make him confess.

The conference, however, proceeded.—"Surely," said Bossuet, "this right of individual examination, which you recognize in each individual, must be accompanied with the highest individual presumption." "That by no means follows," replied M. Claude: "When the synagogue declared that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah promised by the prophets, and condemned him to death, would not an individual, who believed him to be the true Christ, have judged better than the synagogue? Could you accuse such an individual of *presumptuously* believing, that he understood the Scriptures better than all the synagogue?"

A more able reply than this of M. Claude cannot be conceived. It produced a great effect on all the persons present. Bossuet informs us, in his relation of the conference, that this effect of it was observed by him: that, though he himself was fully aware of the answer, which he ought to give to it, he was afraid, that he might not express it properly; and that he therefore made a silent prayer to God, that he would inspire him to express it, in such terms, as would remove the impression, made by M. Claude on the minds of the audience. After a moment's silence, he addressed M. Claude in these words: "You say, that my assertion, that the individual, who set

up his own private opinion, in opposition to that of the whole church, must be guilty of intolerable presumption, fixes the charge of equal presumption on those, who believed in Jesus Christ, in opposition to the sentence of the synagogue, which had pronounced him guilty of blasphemy. Most certainly, my assertion proves nothing of the kind. When an individual *now* sets up his own private opinion in opposition to that of the whole church, he sets it up against the highest authority on earth, as the earth contains no authority, to which an appeal from that authority can be made. But, when the synagogue condemned Jesus Christ, there was on earth a much higher authority than the synagogue; to that authority the individual, who reprobated the proceedings of the synagogue, might appeal. Truth herself *then* visibly existed among men,—the Messiah, the eternal Son of God,—He, to whom a voice from above had rendered testimony, by proclaiming before the whole people, that he was the well-beloved Son of God,—He, who restored the dead to life, gave sight to the blind, and did so many miracles, that the Jews themselves confessed, no man had done the like before him;—He, the Jesus himself, then existed among men; and was the visible external authority, to whom there was a lawful appeal from the synagogue. His authority was infallible. I hear you say that it was a contested authority. I know, that it was contested; but, as a Christian, *you* are bound

to say, that no individual could reasonably, or conscientiously, contest it. It was not therefore presumption, it was duty to disobey the synagogue; and to believe in Christ. Bring back to me Jesus Christ in person; bring him teaching, preaching, and working miracles, I no longer want the church. But don't take the church from me, unless you give me Jesus Christ in person. You say, you have his word. Yes, certainly! we have his holy, adorable word. But, what is to be done with those, who understand it in a wrong sense? Jesus Christ is not present in person to set them right; they must, therefore, obey the church. Before Jesus Christ appeared among the Jews, they were bound to obey the synagogue: when the synagogue failed, Jesus Christ came among men, to teach them all truth; and they were bound to obey his voice. When he returned to his Father, he left us his church, and we are bound to obey her voice. There is not,—no, there is not on earth, any visible higher authority, to which you can appeal from her."

This, according to Bossuet's account, set Claude within a second dilemma:—if he said that the sentence of the national assembly was not to be questioned, Bossuet proved his assertion to Mademoiselle de Duras, that the Huguenots acted, as if they believed the authority of their church was infallible; if he said the sentence of the national assembly might be questioned, Bossuet's assertion, that it was a maxim of the Huguenot church, that every in-

dividual might believe, that he understood the Scriptures better than the highest authority in his communion, was equally proved.—With much apparent reluctance, M. Claude veered to the latter position;—and thus Bossuet professes to have performed his second promise to Mademoiselle de Duras.

We now come to the last of the three points, which Bossuet had promised Mademoiselle de Duras, to make M. Claude confess; and which appeared to her the strangest of the three;—that, "in the opinion of Huguenots, there is a period, during which, a *Christian* is under a necessity of doubting, whether the Bible be inspired by God; whether the Gospel be truth, or a fable; and whether Jesus Christ were a teacher of truth, or an impostor."—Bossuet opened the discussion of this point by asking M. Claude, "if a Christian, when he has the Gospel put, for the first time, into his hands, must necessarily doubt, whether it be divinely inspired, before he can make an act of faith of its being the word of God." M. Claude replied, that, "in such a situation, a Christian does not doubt, but is ignorant, whether the Gospel is divinely inspired. And permit me," he said to Bossuet, "to put the same question to you, substituting, in my question, the church, whenever, in yours, you introduce the Gospel. I therefore ask you, in my turn, whether a Christian, who has the authority of the church, for the first time, proposed to him, must not, before he makes an act of faith of it, neces-

sarily doubt; and examine the grounds of that authority? You see that the question forces each of us into the same difficulties;—whatever you say on the subject, in reference to the Gospel, I shall say upon it, in reference to the church."

The disputants were now fairly at issue on two points;—the first, whether, in respect to the Gospel, M. Claude, by acknowledging the right of previous examination, admitted, that, while that examination lasted, a *Christian* must necessarily doubt, that the Scripture was the word of God; the second, whether, in respect to the church, the same arguments should not force a similar confession from Bossuet They were distinct points, and Bossuet appears to have been anxious to keep them distinct.

" I perceive," he said to M. Claude, " the tendency of your expressions.—Whether you will argue, or will have a right to argue, from my doctrine, respecting a Christian's faith in the church, as I shall argue from your doctrine respecting a Christian's faith in the Gospel, we shall quickly see. For the present, let us stick to the fact.—I aver, that, according to the principles of your church, there is a moment, (I mean the period of examination) in which a Christian, (*I don't speak of an infidel*) must doubt of the Gospel, and of Christ." " I have said," M. Claude answered, " that he is ignorant; he does not doubt." " Can he then," said Bossuet, " when the Gospel is thus, for

the first time, presented to him, make an act of divine faith, that the book presented to him, is the word of God." "He cannot," answered M. Claude; "he can only believe it out of deference to the authority of his parents, or of some other person. He is a catechumen."—"No," said Bossuet, "he is not a catechumen; he is a Christian; he has been baptized, and the alliance, which baptism externally sealed on him, has been internally sealed on his heart, by the Holy Ghost."—"On that point," said M. Claude, "there are two opinions;" but M. Claude ingenuously added, "I admit it."—"Then," said Bossuet, "it follows, that, in virtue of the faith, infused into him in his baptism, a Christian, who has attained the use of reason, is qualified to make an act of faith, when it is presented to him. I therefore, ask you, whether, before he has examined the Gospel, a Christian can make this act of faith."—"I believe the Scripture to be the word of God, as I believe God to exist."—M. Claude said that, after the Christian had read the Scripture, he believed it to be the word of God by divine faith; but that, until he had read it, he could not be led to this conclusion by human reasoning only. "But human reason," said Bossuet, "is always fallible, and therefore always doubtful. And thus, according to your principles, there is a moment,—(that of examination) during which, *the Christian* necessarily doubts, or, if you prefer the expression, is ignorant of what you call the

fundamental article of faith,—that the Scripture is the word of God, and therefore, during the whole time of examination, is an infidel."

In this manner, Bossuet professes to have performed his third promise to Mademoiselle de Duras: it remained for him to defend himself against M. Claude's intimation, that, in maintaining a Christian's obligation to believe, with divine faith, the authority of the church, it would be necessary for Bossuet to admit, that he must previously examine the point, as he must doubt it, during the continuance of such an examination, and be therefore, during the whole of that period, an infidel.

"No such consequence attends the Roman Catholic doctrine," said Bossuet. "The first instant after a Roman Catholic, or *any Christian*, comes to the use of reason, he may make this act of divine faith,—I believe the church. I entreat you to observe, that I am speaking of a baptized person, of a Christian, not of an infidel. In virtue of his baptism, the Christian has the habit of true faith, and therefore believes, when he attains the use of reason, in God the Father, in God the Son, in God the Holy Ghost, and in the holy Catholic church. The Apostles' creed contains all these articles: and the Apostles' creed is not a set of conclusions, to which a child arrives by examination; but a declaration of the faith, infused into him at his baptism by the Holy Ghost. Against this, the infidel may argue consistently with his tenets; a Christian cannot. Thus the doc-

trine of Roman Catholics is wholly free from the difficulty, you have intimated. All Roman Catholics, all Christians, except Protestants, believe the divine authority of the church to be an article of faith, infused by the Holy Ghost into every Christian at his baptism. Now, it is a tenet of the church, that the Scripture is the word of God.—Thus, from the first instant of their reason, the Roman Catholics believe their church, and the tenets of their church; so that, as there never is a moment, in which a Roman Catholic doubts of the church, there never is a moment, in which he doubts of the divine inspiration of the Scripture, which is a tenet of his church. But you, who deny the authority of the church, are driven to the terrible inconvenience of being obliged to admit, that there is a period, during which, it is in the necessity of things, that *the Christian* doubts, or, if you prefer the expression, is without the belief of this fundamental article of faith,—the divine inspiration of the Scripture."

This was strong reasoning; but M. Claude rallied. "This way of reasoning," he shrewdly observed, "must make every person decide in favour of his own church. The Greeks, Arminians, Æthiopians, even we, whom you think so much in the wrong, are baptized; by your account, therefore, all of us actually have the true faith, the true Scriptures, and the true interpretation of them."

Bossuet's acknowledgment of the force of

this argument, and of the great impression, which it made on the persons, present at the conference, should be mentioned in his own words:—"A more forcible objection than M. Claude's could not be urged. The answer to it immediately occurred to me, but I was apprehensive of not expressing it in a manner to make it fully understood. I trembled as I spoke; for I thought the salvation of a soul was at stake; and I offered a prayer to God, that, as he made the truth known to me, he would furnish me with words, that would enable me to present it, in its full light, to my hearers. My dispute was with a man, who listened patiently; expressed himself with clearness, and strength; and was able to avail himself of any thing, which the least want of precision opened to attack."

Such were Bossuet's feelings, as he himself has expressed them, on M. Claude's observation. The reader, probably, is curious to see, how he delivered himself from the consequences, to which it seemed to lead. He remarked to M. Claude, that the reformed church was to be distinguished from the Greek, and from all the other churches, which he had mentioned; as the members of all those churches professed both to receive, *at their baptism*, the faith of the *true church*, and to believe, with divine faith, at their first use of reason, her divine authority: so that, in their own opinion, there never was a moment, in which the members of those churches were without faith in

the true church, or faith in her authority, or faith in her Scriptures:—while, on the other hand, M. Claude, and all the communicants with his church, admitted it to be an article of their doctrine, that, during all the period, which preceded, or was employed in examination, they had not faith in the true church, in her authority, or in her Scriptures; and thus, as to the point immediately under discussion, all those churches might be cited against M. Claude.

After this preliminary observation, Bossuet proceeded to consider M. Claude's assertion, that, as the members of all those churches, and also the members of the Huguenot churches, were baptized, it necessarily followed from Bossuet's own doctrine, that they continued, while they were members of the church, in which they were baptized, to possess the true faith, the true Scriptures, and the true interpretation of them.—This brought the disputants to immediate issue:—Bossuet replied, that, when a person is baptized, the Holy Ghost confers on him, without regard to the faith of the person, who baptizes him, or the church, in which he is baptized, the faith of the church, mentioned in the Apostles' creed; the faith of the holy Catholic church:—that the baptized person continues a member of that true church, till the example of his parents, or some other circumstance, seduces him from it. "Thus," said Bossuet, "the members of the churches, which have been mentioned, and the members

of your church, are in error, not on account of an erroneous faith, which they received in baptism, but because they have abandoned the true faith,—the faith of the holy Catholic church, which they received in baptism."

This was Bossuet's reply to his adversary's attack:—and the conference now drew to its conclusion.*

* I have already stated the result of the important discussion. Mademoiselle de Duras, in the course of a few weeks, renounced the Protestant religion. She made her public abjuration of it, in the hands of Bossuet, in the presence of an assembly of many of the most distinguished personages in Paris, in the church of the Doctrine Chrétienne

In consequence of certain misrepresentations, relating to the conference, Bossuet was induced, ere long, to publish an account of the whole transaction,—in a small volume, entitled, "Conférence avec M. Claude." This, too, is a work, which, like his Exposition, produced a very great sensation in France; and contributed powerfully to bring about the conversion of a multitude of learned, and well-informed members, of the reformed churches. It is, indeed, an instrument, which well deserves the attention of every Protestant, to whom the security of his salvation is an object of solicitude, and interest; as, in fact, it merits also the serious study of all those, to whom polemical discussions are the subjects, either of satisfaction, or of curiosity

THE END.

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